Building an evidence based practical guide to Large Scale Interventions

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Towards sustainable organisational change with the whole system

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Building an evidence based practical guide to Large Scale Interventions

Towards sustainable organisational change with the whole system

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Content

Preface

This book tells the story of my research project on organisational change. The central idea was to find out more about what makes a change process sustainable, especially when engagement of the people concerning the change issue is required for success. My journey started more or less in the year 2000, with a remarkable moment during the intake meeting for my post-doctoral study Change Management. The course manager presented me with a two-page list with literature titles and asked me "What literature do you already know?" and I was sent off with preliminary homework of reading my first two titles: Mintzberg's 'Structures in Five' and Morgan's 'Images of Organizations'. At that time, my first doctoral study in biology and ecology did not seem a good preparation for organisation studies. I took off by reading the titles on the list mentioned and have never stopped since. I rediscovered my passion for doing research and started a PhD project, of which this book reports the results. I took great pleasure in finding out that dynamics in work systems are not that different from dynamics in natural systems. That is why I have chosen a photo of the wild coast of the Scottish Isle of Skye for the cover of this book. I see the massive permanence of the mountains in the background, combined with the ongoing intervention of the sea on the foreground and covered by the fascinating, unpredictable shapes of the clouds in the sky as symbols of my experiences during the research process. Sometimes sunny, sometimes threatening, but always complex, compelling and with an ongoing rhythm.

Although there is only one author named on the front cover, many people have contributed to the making of this book with support of many kinds. In the first place, I want to thank my sisters Gerrie and Marry for making it possible to do the change management study that initiated this research, by looking after my children whenever needed. I thank my brother Pieter for setting a good example and for our inspiring conversations about science and philosophy.

Friends and colleagues from whom I have gotten inspiration, helping hands and feedback in the last ten years are Leo van Weert, Russell Kerkhoven, Marens Engelhard, Renny van Tuyl, Kees Waagmeester, Jeroen Hoekstra, Peter Strobosch and Mark de Koning. Mark also made the striking cartoons for Chapter 2 of this book.

This book benefited enormously from the work and stimulating responses of Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff. I am grateful for their wise words and for the time we have spent together making music.

I owe so much to so many people that it is impossible to name them all individually. I thank the members of the worldwide networks who contributed with information and feedback, in particular those who participated in an interview, workshop or online discussion. They are members of the Future Search Network, Open Space World, the World Café Community and the Society for Organisational Learning. I am very grateful to all the participants of the two conferences I organ-

ised, for discussing the results of this research and for their constructive comments for improving the Practical Guide. Gerard Muller deserves a special thanks as he came up with the idea of organising an interactive large group conference to discuss the research outcomes with potential user groups. The seven members of the planning team of the live conference helped to prepare and facilitate a great conference. I thank Gabriela Ender for her generous assistance with using the software for the online research conference and her permission for using the screen shots in this publication. I thank Gerhard Fatzer of Trias Institute in Switzerland for his enthusiasm and support in getting attention for my work and Bert van der Hooft for helping me with getting the research Wiki online. Furthermore, the members of the research platform of Sioo provided me with both inspiration and guidance in research matters. I thank Paul Kloosterboer, Gerhard Smid and Jaap Boonstra for playing a leading role in my promotion try-out.

In the phase of the case study, the contact person of the case organisation played a key-role. I thank them for their willingness to tell me their stories, giving me their documents and allowing me evaluate their work. Without them, this research would not have been possible. I want to give a special thanks to Ronald Dulmers, my co-facilitator in the two School Cases and to Marja Lensink, facilitator of the Library Case, for their cooperation in reconstructing the cases after two years. Four students of the Master Circle Organisation Studies of Tilburg University have tested the evaluation instrument I have developed. Pieter Adema, Mark Hummel, Noortje van de Mortel and Judith Poppelaars came up with valuable improvements.

I thank everyone who helped to organise a great graduation day. In particular my two paranimphs for wanting to stand by my side during the thesis defence: my daughter Paula van Brakel and my friend and colleague Eva van der Fluit. In the last years Eva has also supported me with feedback and stimulating words in moments of doubt.

Not mentioned so far is my promoter Jac Geurts. He pushed my thinking and writings further and deeper. I really enjoyed our sessions and I appreciate that he could always find time to discuss things at short notice.

My proof reader Deolinda Caldeira provided valuable comments, which improved the final document greatly. Its remaining errors are all mine.

During the last year, the writing process demanded the largest part of my time and energy. I thank my family, especially my children Oeke, Paula and David, and friends for their support. Finally, I thank my love Francis Roeffen for helping me through the stress of the finishing phase. I thank him for his patience with me, knowing that there will always be some other work that keeps me occupied.

Introduction

What is this book about?

This book presents an evidence based guide for the practice of participative organisational change, in particular with the whole system approach called Large Scale Interventions (LSI). The guide offers an instrument and tools for systematic evaluation of interventions. The making of this instrument has been presented as an educated, reflective inquiry, offering a synthesis of the field. The book is based on six years of applied social research and extensive personal experience as practitioner of participative interventions.

Since the initiation of Large Group Methods in the eighties, 'Large Scale Interventions' gained its own place worldwide, and this practice is growing fast. As this study will show, there is by now a lot of narrative, descriptive and even some systematically collected evidence that 'LSI works'. However, this widely scattered information is not readily available to the field. No systematic effort has been undertaken to critically and theoretically assess the available empirical evidence and develop from there practical guidelines for the field. Disappointingly, almost none specific research nor interpretive studies are available that focus on the effectiveness for ***sustainable*** (i.e. lasting) change as claimed in most literature on Large Group Methods. This is important while meanwhile, critique in everyday practice is growing, labelling large group events as 'talk fests' or 'dayflies'. In my opinion, most critique is caused by application of LSI under the wrong conditions, or by bad design or performance. This raises the two main questions this book will answer: "Based on available evidence and theory, when and how is LSI effective for sustainable organisational change?" And: "How can this evidence and theory be translated into a practical guide to the preparation, application and evaluation of Large Scale Interventions?"

This book is not about 'How to design and perform a large group meeting'. It offers a frame-work with guidelines for embedding Large Group Methods when organising for sustainable change; the framework has to be filled in for each specific situation.

This book is not meant to profile LSI as THE paradigm or THE imperative for change. It demonstrates that walking on the two legs of careful academic research and rich examples of practical experience results in a validated practical guide, comparable with information leaflets in medicine and finance.". The book will be of value for reflective practitioners, academics and students occupied with organisational change and learning.

Why a practical guide?

The aim of the book is to improve the practice of organisational change, especially when engagement of stakeholders, internal and external, is needed for success. Organisations have to deal with fast-changing environments, and top-down approaches have been proven ineffective in building

capacity for change. Expert solutions may produce good plans, but implementation often falls short because it takes too long, or stakeholders do not feel engaged. LSI combines top-down and bottom-up processes, involving stakeholders at every stage of the change trajectory. On one or more occasions, there is a conference with the whole system in the room.

The speed-change of the environment of organisations and the increasing complexity of issues made the practice of participative interventions (also called interactive interventions) grow successfully. Many books have been written on how to apply specific intervention methods in order to involve stakeholders in the change process. Most of them portray the methods in a rather idealistic way, claiming to bring about sustainable organisational change. Yet almost no systematic research has been done to support this claim. Moreover, the dangers of disintegration and degeneration of the application for commercial reasons have been signalled. The need for guidelines for effective use beyond specific methods is strong, and will increase further in the coming years. Furthermore, this book will meet the need for an *evaluation instrument* to improve effectiveness in the short as well as the longer term, and for further research on interventions.

How is this book structured?

Show people the baby, don't show them the labour (Roy Suddaby)

This book tells the story of a research journey. Besides research design, process, results and conclusions, it also reveals the struggles, the joys, the discoveries, and the surprises that take place during explorative research in the field. It is a sometimes confusing journey, where things get messed up (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010). For traditional scientists used to passive and neutral language, my reflections on the process may seem a bit too wild sometimes. However, I wish these reflections to be an illustration of cross-disciplinary thinking, and an inspiration for further thinking. They are important to show relations, between the scholar, the research journey and the findings.

In the introduction to the book (Chapter 1), readers are invited on a journey, an inquiry into a practice called Large Scale Interventions, also known as Large Group Interventions, or Whole Systems Change. The journey starts with a sneak preview of a successful and an unsuccessful LSI. The organisations are comparable, the facilitators are the same. What made the difference? How could effectiveness have been improved? A research journey has been prepared to answer these questions (Chapter 2 and 3). A model for effectiveness of interventions serves as a guide. The research design includes multiple methods and sources, looking for patterns that connect rather than linear logic between variables.

The first stop in the journey is taking time to explore the state of the art of LSI (Chapter 4). LSI is introduced as a bigger process than the large group conferences. LSI practice is synthesized at the level of principles and working elements, beyond specific Large Group Methods. History, characteristics, methods and position in organisation theory are displayed. Finally, the practice of LSI is critically discussed.

At the second stop, a theoretical framework for effectiveness of interventions is built (Chapter 5). Effectiveness is defined on two levels: first-order or short-term change to get more and better work done, and second-order or sustainable change to develop a lasting collective capacity to change. Some readers may want to skip this rather theoretical part, and continue with an immersion in LSI practice, looking for success factors and effects in the short and longer term. These factors have been found through prolonged engagement with networks, systematic text analysis of interviews with 35 people and reports of more than 50 cases documented in articles and books. Combined with knowledge of audit methods used in accountancy and quality management, this stage results in an evaluation instrument (Chapter 6). The evaluation instrument had to be tested and improved in practice. This was done in a comparative case study, by reconstructing three LSI trajectories two years after the fact (Chapter 7). Stakeholders and documents of the three cases provided rich stories about success factors and effectiveness. Together with the evaluation instrument, all results of the case study are wrapped up in a practical guide. The format of the guide has been borrowed from a practical guide for medical treatment, since medicine has a long tradition in evidence based information leaflets for professionals and clients. But how do we know whether the developed guide is correct, adequate and usable in practice?

The next episode (Chapter 8) concerns two interactive research conferences, one live and one online, to validate the guide. The conferences reflect the value 'practise what you preach', by using design principles and techniques of Large Group Intervention Methods. Participants (up to 60 international researchers, consultants, and clients of LSI) call it an innovation in qualitative research. The practical guide has been corrected and further improved. The practical guide on how to use LSI effectively is offered to the reader as a separate Part (Chapter 9-13), making it easy to use as stand-alone module. This Part opens (Chapter 9) with how to use the guide in three different phases: assessment of preconditions before the start, assessment of design and performance during the LSI, and evaluation of effectiveness after the LSI. For each phase, the guide offers guidelines, procedures and tools. For each phase the guidelines are clarified (Chapter 10, 11 and 12), with observable indicators and illuminated with text boxes containing short lively stories from the case study. Reflection boxes offer deeper elaboration. The Client Information Leaflet (see Section 9.4) contains the essential information in an abbreviated form for clients.

The journey ends with a palette of insights, offering a menu that serves the needs of various reader groups. Chapter 14 discusses why LSI works, reflecting on conclusions and relevant theoretical concepts. Chapter 15 looks forward, providing recommendations for further research of effectiveness of interventions. In Chapter 16, the embedding of the guide is discussed in relation to pros and cons of evidence based consultancy.

The Appendix contains practical tools related to assessment of preconditions and evaluation of effectiveness in the short- and longer-term. It offers references to further information on LSI, the underlying principles of LSI, and to evaluation research.

Part 1: Preparing the Search

1 Sneak preview: Impressions of more and less effective interventions

1.1 Two stories of Large Scale Interventions (LSIs)

What does a successful Large Scale Intervention (LSI) look like? This chapter starts with a sneak preview of two participative large group conferences and how each conference contributed to effectiveness of the bigger change process of the LSI. Such conferences, meetings with the whole system in the room, form the heart of the change process LSI. The two conferences are facilitated by the same facilitators, the organisations and methods are comparable, nevertheless the LSIs differ widely in effectiveness, according to the evaluation two years later. The stories form the overture to a search for success factors and criteria to evaluate effectiveness. What happened? What made the difference?

1.2 An LSI with a Parent Café for envisioning a desirable future

At half-past four, on a warm afternoon in May 2007, a highly diverse group of 160 participants gathers in the basement of a motel. The motel is situated near the highway of a large town in the South of the Netherlands. The room is set up as a large café, with small tables in an informal setting. Background music, dimmed light, small tables with about five chairs each, create an informal atmosphere. Behind a long blank, brown-plated wall, part of the room is being prepared for dinner. Onto a screen, a welcome slide with the café theme is being projected: *How do our schools become the best in the region?* Eric, the General Director of the 24 primary public schools, welcomes everyone: a selection of parents from every school, directors, some teachers and also the members of the Board. Eric introduces the programme briefly. The facilitators, Tonnie and Ronald, explain the way of working and invite participants to discuss the questions 'What makes a good school? What is most important for you?'. Everyone individually writes criteria on sticky-notes. Lively discussions follow at each table on what is considered important. Meanwhile, drinks and beverages are being served. People change tables a few times, as is often done in a café, and they exchange their ideas with newcomers. "What did you talk about? Oh, but I think ….." or "Interesting, which reminds me of ….". During their conversations, people write and doodle on the notes, as reminders of the conversation. After about three quarters of an hour, everyone posts the sticky-notes they think most important on a 12-meter long paper strip on the wall. Conclusions are collected plenary. One parent makes a warm plea for more sport at school, he leaves a deep impression (two years later every participant recalls this moment). After a good buffet dinner, Tonnie invites everyone to envision the desired future. Imagine, it is 2011. On the evening news it is announced that our schools are the best schools in the Southern half of the Netherlands. Of course,

they are not perfect, but parents qualify them as the best they can imagine for their children. What does that school look like? How was this achieved? Table groups are formed, with the help of a simple marketing tool for selecting the preferred type of school. In one hour, every group produces a poster reflecting their vision. People seem to be enjoying the creative process, there is much laughter and a lot of action. Twenty-one posters are created, some of them with complete educational concepts. Eric facilitates a gallery walk with a plenary presentation of the posters. Just after half past nine p.m., Eric closes the conference and invites participants for a drink to celebrate. As they leave, participants post a card with tips from the future for the Board.

Two years later, this LSI is reconstructed and evaluated using the evaluation instrument developed in this study. The overall conclusions are: a successful LSI; the primary goals of the project were reached; relations with parents were improved; sustainable change showed in increased capacity to work participatively; the LSI created ripples. However, the focus could have been less on the conference and more on the bigger process.

1.3 An LSI with an Open Space as kick-off for profiling public primary schools

In early February 2007, a group of up to 70 directors and assistant directors of public primary schools meets in a communication museum in the city centre of a large town in the West of the Netherlands. The weather is grey but dry. The conference room is long and narrow, with windows on one of the long sides. Murphy's Law at work: project leader Désirée is unable to come, General Executive Wiely has been delayed. After reception with coffee, everyone takes a seat in a wide oval of chairs. Ronald, facilitator and consultant specialized in school marketing, starts with a visualisation of twenty minutes. He tells a story about a parent's experiences when visiting one of the schools. Then Wiely explains the goals for the day and for the bigger change process, including personal targets for acquisition of pupils. After one hour, Tonnie introduces the rules of Open Space Technology. The theme is: How do we make our schools more attractive? The energy level is low. In the first few minutes, no one enters the circle to suggest a subject for a subgroup. Finally, eleven groups form for the first round and seven for the second round. Wiely is enthusiastic about the process: they are really taking responsibility for subgroups and some groups are having lively discussions, while writing conclusions on flip charts. Each group produces a report in the news centre with ten laptops. Reports are copied in a nearby copy centre. During a buffet lunch, information about school marketing and support options is displayed. Ronald and his colleague Luc are walking around, busy answering questions. Participants are asked to read the morning reports as soon as they come in from the copy shop.

After lunch, there is a plenary discussion on the results of the morning. Then participants place stickers on flip charts to select their most important items. A third round for action planning is on the agenda, but energy is dropping fast. At three o'clock pm, Wiely and Tonnie decide to skip the third round and start with the conference evaluation in the closing circle of Open Space. Some participants are positive about the exchange of experiences and the opportunity for everyone who wanted to contribute to do so, others pass the microphone on with a sceptic face. Every participant receives a binder with the reports and information about school marketing.

Overall conclusions of the evaluation after two years: views of directors differ widely about effectiveness. Client and consultants think the LSI was a good start. Yet most effects are attributed to follow-up actions concerning marketing improvement and to decisiveness of the central staff. Conference design and performance of the facilitators were not optimal. Sustainable effects have been minimal.

1.4 What constitutes success?

The LSIs presented in the sneak preview of Chapter 1 are stories out of my own consultancy practice. In both cases, I was one of the facilitators. For me, these experiences confirmed the need for a more systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI. They also stressed the need to focus on the bigger change process instead of on the sometimes spectacular meeting with a large group or people representing the whole system, the so called Large Group Interventions (LGI). The stories illustrate that on the one hand a successful large group meeting does not automatically lead to the desired sustainable change, while on the other hand an apparently less successful large group meeting was perhaps the best that could be achieved considering the circumstances. The next Chapter will go deeper into the need for systemic evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI.

2 Need for synthesis of the field beyond Large Group Methods: Research opportunity and aims

This chapter will further explore how my desire and opportunity to start a research journey into the practice of LSI have been leading to a search for guidelines for more effective use of LSI, with the aim to contribute to sustainable organisational change. Next, the need will be stressed for synthesis of the field on the level of the bigger change process, beyond the large group meetings and specific large group methods.

2.1 In the beginning: Personal experiences with LSI practice

Research opportunity

"*We want further professionalisation of our education consultants in the way they collaborate with clients in the development of a good vision and strategy for their schools. We already selected some interesting approaches for vision and strategy development, such as working with Scenarios and with Large Scale Interventions. We studied your website and we think you have a captivating vision on organisational development, based on the Logic of Feeling of Arnold Cornelis. Tonnie, do you want to make a proposal for us for a learning route for our consultants, concerning Large Scale Interventions? It has to be a practice oriented route, though with the necessary depth regarding underlying principles and the basic assumptions.*"

This conversation took place at CPS Onderwijsadvies in the autumn of the year 2004. In April 2005, I started the first learning route, including a two-day training and coaching on the job. In the years afterwards, my practice grows as a facilitator of LSI processes for organisations, and as a trainer-coach for consultants who want to learn how to work with the LSI approach. Together with my colleague Peter Strobosch I developed an online handbook by LSI (Zouwen & Strobosch, 2005a). I end up deeply involved in the world of participative change with Large Scale Interventions. In that world, I see interesting contrasts between the success stories from the books and my experiences in practice. It looks like the organisations most in need of participative change are not open for it. Can a consultant bring any change there? Sometimes I see a clear impact of interventions, frequently everything remains more or less the same. What makes the difference? From my interest in doing research (I was trained in biological and organisational research), the idea arose to do research on the effects of participative change and the conditions for success. As a so-called *buitenpromovendus*, a PhD candidate doing research in her own practice and not on the payroll of a university, I have chosen an approach in which the research process and my practice as an independent consultant could reinforce each other. For this reason, the focus of this research lies on change trajectories with LSI, since they form my core business. What is happening? What makes success?

Focus on effectiveness for sustainable change

I have chosen the role of an inquirer in the field, investigating the phenomenon LSI in practice. I have experienced the power of LSI in bringing people together, across the boundaries of organisations and disciplines, I have seen the realization of new forms of cooperation, but I also experienced the pitfalls and problems when it comes to continuation of effects, to embedding new patterns in everyday working, making the change sustainable. Although it is certainly not my opinion that only sustainable results are valuable, I want to investigate the claim for sustainable change. I see sustainable change as developing capacity how to change. Arnold Cornelis (1993) calls this the development of communicative self-steering. What I see as sustainable change will be framed in Chapter 5.

2.2 Claim for sustainable change, little research done

Too much changing, not enough learning (Mike Pedler)

This study started as a project to explore the effectiveness of Large Scale Interventions (LSIs). LSI (or Large Scale Change, or Whole Systems Change, or Whole Systems Work) is an approach in which stakeholders are engaged in a collective process of change and learning, to address challenging issues in their organisations or communities. In many books and articles about LSI, practitioners describe the success of LSI for collective learning and organising across boundaries of organisations and disciplines. However, in my own experience as a facilitator of LSI, and as a trainer and coach for consultants who want to practice LSI, I have learned that LSI-consulting can be hard and risky. It is not an easy task to match design and conditions, or to establish sustainable effects. Leaders have to be ready for this approach, the profits have to be worth the effort, and consultants have to step away from an expert attitude.

To support my learning route for consultants and the online handbook (Zouwen & Strobosch, 2005a), I studied a large number of sources available in literature and on the internet. I found little report of thorough research evaluating the effectiveness of LSI in relation to the working elements and conditions in the system. Almost all case descriptions are self-reported evaluations of practitioners, reporting sustainable large scale change. They describe how methods were used in diverse industries, and governmental organisations. Unfortunately, comparative research on the effectiveness with large sample sizes or longitudinal studies, is missing (Fullarton & Palermo, 2008; Geurts, Altena, & Geluk, 2007; Granata, 2005; Nistelrooij, 1999; Purser & Griffin, 2008; Shmulyian, Bateman, Philpott, & Gulri, 2010; Weber, 2000; White, 2002). Some evaluations have been performed, but most of them focus on the processes taking place during the Large Group events (Oels, 2002; Polanyi, 2002), only a few concern the trajectory and the sustainable results *after* these events (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Nistelrooij, 1999; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). Most sources focus on a specific Large Group Intervention Method, providing recipes that have to be followed quite strictly according to the founders (E. M. Axelrod & Axelrod, 2000a; Dannemiller-Tyson-Associates,

2000a; Emery & Purser, 1996; Jacobs, 1997; Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Owen, 1997; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995).

> I felt the same astonishment John Tarling describes in his article "The Marriage of Theory and Practice in Large Group Interventions". He states (Tarling, 2008, p. 46) "From my science background, it did not make sense that the logistics of an experiment (intervention) would be published, but not the results."

Stephen Garcia (Garcia, 2007, p. 347) states: "Most research efforts have entailed (a) analysing the large-group intervention methods defined by practitioners, or (b) concern individual case studies of specific large-group interventions. Neither tests the proposed hypotheses, they provide no quantitative evidence". Evidence from research so far (Arena, 2004; Oels, 2002; Polanyi, 2002; Shmulyian, et al., 2010; Weber, 2005a) points out that primary effects are reached when well performed, but the definition of sustainable effects turns out to be ambiguous, making them hard to measure.

There appears to be a big gap between organisational research and the daily practices of the 'change professionals'. In their discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of Real Time Strategic Change, a specific Large Group Intervention Method (LGIM), John Bryson and Sharon Anderson conclude (2000, p. 147): "Also, while there are many testimonials to the effectiveness of the method, we are aware of no carefully done, published research studies to verify the point. This last criticism applies, more or less to all LGIMs." Almost no research is done on the wider scope of the participative approach of enhancing collective learning in the system (Granata, 2005). With more and more consultants and facilitators using Large Group Methods (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Groot, 2002; Weber, 2005a) in a whole system approach, the need grows for more insight into conditions and results in the light of the efforts made (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007).

I concluded that a an important part of the explanation of the lack of evidence on sustainable impacts of LSI lies in the existence of a double gap:

a. There is no integration into one conceptual structure of all the scattered evidence that existing sources from the daily practice of LSI offer

b. There is no translation of an integrative inventory of evidence into a theory based practical guide that can help focus future LSIs more purposefully on the challenging task of creating sustainable change.

This study aims to bridge these gaps between the daily practice of LSI and organisation theory, by bridging part of the gap between daily practice of LSI and organisational theories, and by developing a practical guide with a Client Information Leaflet (CIL) for effective use and systematic evaluation of (sustainable) effects.

2.3 Need for synthesis of the field beyond Large Group Methods

However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results (Winston Churchill)

John Tarling (2008) elaborates on possible reasons for lack of assessment data. What are factors that discourage evaluation of interventions for organisational change and development? Besides lack of time and money, perceived lack of value of evaluation, organisational politics, and protection of consultant reputation, he sees a possibility that the lack of outcome assessment points to a fundamental issue within the OD profession itself, he supposes (2008, p. 47): "Is the reluctance to critically assess outcomes based on a fear of revealing yet another OD method that is not wearing any clothes?"

Professional and scientific infrastructure also plays a role. Management and Organisation Studies (MOS) is a field with low task and functional dependence. Therefore the level of integration of results and ideas is low, resulting in a widespread disinterest in replication of result evaluation on the part of MOS Journals. There is a preference for novelty over accumulation of knowledge (Rousseau et al, 2008 p. 489).

> James March (2007, cited in Baaijens, Kenis, & Meeus, 2009, p. 84) says: "The field of organisation studies is a large, heterogeneous field involving numerous enclaves having distinct styles, orientations and beliefs. It is integrated neither by a shared theory, nor by a shared perspective, nor even by a shared tolerance for multiple perspectives."

Interventions for organisational change, are based on a variety of disciplines, as Chapter 4 will show for LSI. Researching organisational change implies interdisciplinary research, requiring a shared language, a narrative using metaphors to address a diverse audience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Mackenzie & Ling, 2009). However, MOS form a relatively young field. Unlike theory building in the natural sciences, organisational theory has proceeded without a strong sense of collective endeavour (Edmondson, 1996). For medicinal and financial products, an information leaflet is a common requirement. Users of the medical or financial product receive directions for application, information about the working elements, possible results, possible risks, and the contraindications for use. In the world of organisational change and community development the effectiveness of methods may be more ambiguous (Baaijens, et al., 2009; Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008) and therefore more difficult to prove, but some critical directions must be possible. Or is it true that 'anything goes' in the hand of a good change facilitator? (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007; Suddaby, 2006). One could claim a placebo effect of LSI: it is not about working elements in a method, it is the feeling of engagement that matters (Mayer 1997, p. 239).

> A quick search on internet with Google for 'Evidence based Consultancy', 'Evidence based Consulting' and 'Evidence based Advice' show hits mainly in the sectors marketing and financial advice. An indication that it is not common practice in organisational change consultancy (Internet search, autumn 2009).

In addition to the factors mentioned so far, systematic evaluation of participative interventions is complicated by the fact that the most appropriate ways to involve users are unknown because it is done too infrequently (Ven, 2000). This study tries to establish common ground, crossing boundaries of disciplines and methods, by focussing on the principles underlying LSI and on how these principles produce a web of characteristics of a successful LSI.

2.4 Publication is biased, also unpublished experiences should be involved

Articles and books refer mostly to articles/books of which express the same opinion and provide support. I think critical views are too often neglected. In my view, different views should be compared and the stance of the writer should be explicitly motivated. Experiences with failed projects, or studies with non-significant results are rarely published, but should be involved in a systematic synthesis of the effectiveness of LSI(Rousseau, et al., 2008; Rouwette, 2003).

> Publication bias is confirmed in other intervention effectiveness studies. Rouwette (2003) studied 86 publications describing 107 cases on Group Model Building. He states (p. 69): "Indeed few descriptions of unsuccessful interventions were found. It could thus be that unsuccessful cases are underreported."

2.5 Growing importance of involving stakeholders in change processes

Several researches make clear that the vast majority of organisational change is approached with methods that descend from the era of the industrial revolution: top-down and planned. That applies to both companies and service agencies (Boonstra, 2000; Collins, 2001; Huy, 2001; Pedler, Pritchard, Wilkinson, & Attwood, 2003; Werkman, 2006). The proofs pile up that in the 21st century these traditional approaches often fail to produce the desired results ((J. D. Adams, 2003; Boonstra, 2000; Delden, 2009a; Werkman, 2006) "Top-down attempts to change, often through a mixture of pronouncements, restructurings and training packages usually fail because they limit other people's contributions and therefore their sense of ownership." (Pedler, et al., 2003, p. 31). John Bryson (2003, p. 6) cites from the study of Paul Nutt *Why Decisions Fail*: "Half of the 400 analysed strategic decisions failed. They were not implemented, only partially implemented or otherwise produced poor results, in a large part because decision makers failed to attend to the interests of and information held by key stakeholders". My colleague Mark de Koning grasped this statement in a striking cartoon (see Figure 2-1).

"*I have shared my vision, so now we have a shared vision*"

Figure 2-1: Top-down approaches fail to involve people
(Cartoon by Mark de Koning)

Since the 1980s, a whole range of interactive change approaches and methods is developed, the so called 'fourth generation methods' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Zeeuw, 1991). What they have in common is a certain degree of interactivity with a diversity of stakeholders (see Figure 2-2), and they are therefore labelled as participative change.

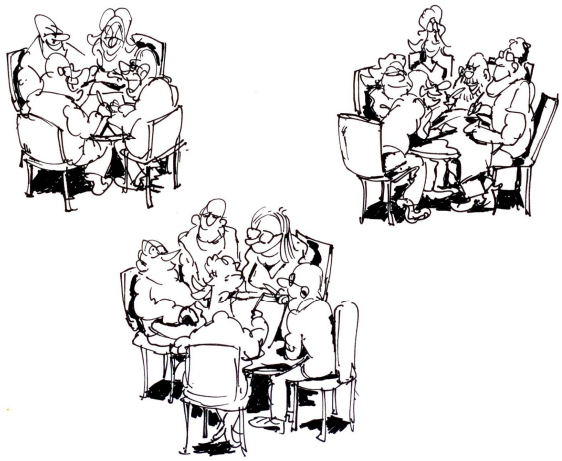


Figure 2-2: Working interactively to build shared visions on the system, looking for common ground for action
(Cartoon by Mark de Koning)

The practices of participative change, and of the whole system approach LSI, are growing (Bryson & Anderson, 2000; Bunker & Alban, 2006; Groot, 2002; Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998; Weber, 2005a; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). The desire to empower people and enhance participation in workplaces and communities fits the global move to democratization with the purpose of better

decisions and better citizens (Bryson & Anderson, 2000; Vulpian, 2005; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a; Wierdsma, 1999). With the successful spreading of LSI all over the globe comes the danger of disintegration caused by giving in to essential principles by consultants. Either on purpose for commercial reasons, or unconsciously from lack of training (Shmulyian, et al., 2010; Tarling, 2008; Weber, 2005a). Furthermore, consultants blend and mix methods and create new ones. But how can minimum requirements be assessed without general criteria and indicators as guidelines? How can be evaluated when the intervention loses its potential to reach the goal?

Increasing interdependence between organisations and increasing complexity of issues require more collaboration and involvement of stakeholders (Schruijer, 2006; Schruijer & Vansina, 2004). Collaboration in chains and networks of stakeholders calls for an explorative, interactive strategy (Delden, 2009b).

Pleas for participative change
John Bryson (2003, p. 6): "Stakeholders analyses are arguable more important than ever, because of the increasingly interconnected nature of the world. Choose any public problem (economic development, poor educational performance, natural resources management, crime, aids, terrorism, global warming…): no one is fully in charge; no organisation 'contains' the problem. Figuring out what the problem is is part of what solutions might work." Marvin Weisbord (2004a, p. xxii): "My major theme is that we hunger for community in the workplace and are a great deal more productive when we find it. To feed this hunger in ways that preserve democratic values of individual dignity, opportunity, and mutual support is to harness energy and productivity beyond imagination. Second reason: the world is changing too fast for experts, and old-fashioned 'problem solving' no longer works." Albert Cherns (1987) observes a shift from data needed by social scientists or engineers to data belonging to the people who have to take action, so the people should be involved in collection and analyses, to get reliable data, right interpretations and acceptance of conclusions.

The plea for participative and interactive change does not only come from advocates of more democracy, it also comes from a competitive business advantage point of view, Edward Lawler (2005, p. 13) articulates: "The most familiar approach to organising public and private organisations is hierarchical and bureaucratic. In fact, because the hierarchical approach is so well known, it is not an approach that is likely to provoke a competitive advantage. The most serious problem in the hierarchical approach is its inability to create an organisation that can combine speed, cost effectiveness, product quality, and learning."

To want, dare and know how to involve stakeholders
John Bryson (2003, pp. 9-11) sees five different categories of reasons why people do not undertake stakeholder analysis. I think they are equally relevant for involving stakeholders in a process for organisational change: leaders do not want, do not dare, or do not know how to involve stakeholders in a change process. I summarise Bryson's categories and reasons as follows:

1. The state of prior knowledge: people simply do not know how to do it, or they think they already know all they need to know about stakeholders.

2. Resource-related issues: we have no time or resources for the analyses, or for the stakeholder involvement, the analyses might prompt. The latter might even be an inclusion bias, that leads people to argue that stakeholder analyses imply a call for 'consensus decision-making', which they see as the opposite of, or as getting in the way of, leadership and action.
3. Concern about what the analyses would reveal: the results might be embarrassing or upsetting for stakeholders, or reveal issues of power, conflict, or accountability that people would rather leave hidden.
4. Concern that the analyses might be destabilising: the analyses might question the status quo, and people want to avoid problems or issues. Or maybe the opposite: when we get used to perform stakeholder analyses, the need for 'fire-fighters' might diminish.
5. Ethical concerns: people may see stakeholder involvement as potentially manipulative in their effects, or raise issues of representation and credibility if the stakeholders themselves are not all present.

It can be concluded that importance and practice of participative change are growing, but what is participative change? It turns out that both clients and consultants often tend to present a change strategy as participative, while employees experience a top-down power strategy (Werkman, Boonstra, & Elving, 2005). Moreover, when is participation the right answer? A comparative review of twelve basic principles of intervention through interaction directs to the need for more insight into the conditions for success (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007, p. 327): "It is said that interactive methods fulfil an important need today: the interventions can link many different perspectives and develop new possibilities for dealing with complexity and dynamics. A lot of longitudinal information is needed to verify this claim."

2.6 Normative bias: One approach for all situations, participation is always good

A normative bias accompanies the blind following of preferred approaches to change while other approaches may be more appropriate, depending on the situation (Kerber & Buono, 2005). This leads to skilled incompetence, a search for the right solutions with the preferred approach of the person(s) in charge (Argyris, 1990; Delden, 2009b; Vermaak, 2009a). Neither top-down change approaches, nor participative ones are the right solutions for all organisational change related problems.

Kenneth Kerber and Anthony Buono conclude (2005, p. 25): "It appears, however, that while participation does increase a sense of ownership in the change, in far too many instances such participative strategies either waste critical resources by unnecessarily involving people or take a limited view of the participation necessary for success. In essence, many of our participation-based solutions either go too far or not far enough."

Many prescriptions and models for organisational change fall well short of the challenge, because they are not used in the right situation or not used in the right way. Kenneth Kerber and Anthony Buono conclude (Kerber & Buono, 2005, p. 24): "Our contention is that such failure is exacerbated and magnified largely by the inappropriate application of different approaches to change. Building true organisational change capacity involves leading change in ways that are appropriate to the

situation". They see the most effective approach to organisational change to be dependent on key contingencies of the situation including complexity of the business environment, the socio-technical uncertainty of the task, the change capacity of the organisation and the risks associated with either no or slow change (2005, p. 34). They conclude: "Within this framework, resistance to change can be thought of, in part, as a function of the demands of the situation and the selected change approach." (2005, p. 34). Yet how do you make a good match between situation, task and approach? And what is 'true organisational change'? That is what this book is about.

2.7 Summary

Where do we stand at the end of this chapter? It turns out that the practice of participative change and of LSI is growing. Consultants are having their way with methods, reporting success in the form of sustainable organisational change. However, little independent evidence is available to support this claim for sustainable change. On the contrary, critical voices assert that sustainable change is hard to achieve, and hard to identify. So far, some research has been done on Large Group Interventions and specific methods, but little research is done on the level of the change process involving the whole system (an approach I call LSI) and the effects in the longer term. Gaps are signalled between systematic research and everyday practice (M. Beer & Nohria, 2000), and between research and LSI literature. Main reasons for these gaps are:

- A lack of syntheses of Management and Organisation Studies (M. Beer & Nohria, 2000; Rousseau, et al., 2008)
- The interest of the consultant, and often of the client as well, in presenting positive results (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007; Tarling, 2008)
- Complex and interdisciplinary interventions are hard to research.

For me these are amazing and disturbing gaps, so I want to find out what is going on and what can be done to reduce them. What will contribute to synthesis of the effectiveness of LSI, and to more effective use of LSI in practice? What research design, fitting my available time and possibilities, will provide acceptable answers for both academics and practitioners?

In the next chapter the research approach and methods will be discussed extensively. This is quite necessary because I have to deal with a double scepticism. LSI-practitioners may reject attempts to capture the process in criteria for success, in fear of losing the mystery of the process. Traditional empiricist research may be of the opinion that only experimentation and objective data can contribute to theory. Entering the field of evidence based practice is like 'walking on the razor's edge' (Bateson, 2002, p. 133). On one side, there is a trap of rigidity, on the other side there is a trap of 'anything goes'. In Chapter 16 the pros and cons of evidence based consultancy will be further discussed.

3 How can effectiveness of LSI be synthesised? Designing the search

I believe that the most powerful knowledge that we can produce is valid and *actionable* (Michael Beer)

This chapter is about research focus, methodology, underlying assumptions, and design of the research journey. If you are not interested in research matters, you may want to skip this chapter and go on with an immersion into the field of LSI in Chapter 4.

As described in Chapter 2, I became fascinated by the questions "When does LSI bring sustainable change? What are success factors? What does sustainable change look like?". The underlying assumption for this research project is: When LSI brings about sustainable change I should be able to find supporting data within a certain domain of cases, some years after an LSI (Strübing, 2007, p. 594).

My objectives are building an evaluation instrument and developing guidelines for more effective use of LSI in practice, presented in the form of a practical guide. This guide has to be based on evidence found in a research process that meets scientific standards. In this chapter, a research journey will be prepared to fulfil this quest.

3.1 Research question: When and how is LSI effective for sustainable change?

As stated in Chapter 2, many top-down change processes are not as effective as planned. Participative change approaches such as LSI are supposed to be more effective, because commitment for change is gained through involving people in the design of the process, given the right circumstances (Boonstra & Caluwé, 2007; By, 2007; Kerber & Buono, 2005; Leith, 2004; Lines, 2004; Nutt, 1998; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994; Weisbord & Janoff, 2007). This leads to the practical question: "When is LSI the right approach". Then again, if circumstances are right for LSI, when does it work, when does it bring sustainable change? Considering the trend to modify and shorten the intervention, mentioned in Section 2.5, when is an intervention really an LSI? When does the foundation dissolve and sink the intervention? Put together, the first main question for the research journey is:

> "Based on available evidence and theory, when and how is LSI an effective approach for sustainable change?"

This question leads to the following sub-questions:

1. What is LSI?
2. What are sustainable versus non-sustainable effects of interventions?
3. What are the effects and in particular, the sustainable effects of LSI-trajectories?
4. What are the working elements in LSI-trajectories?

5. What relations can be seen between working elements and effects?
6. What are the conditions for sustainable effects with LSI?

As stated before, the intended practical deliverable of this study is a practical guide. This intention has been put forward in the second main question for the research journey:

> "How can this evidence and theory be translated into a practical guide to the preparation, application and evaluation of Large Scale Interventions?"

To create this guide this study will answer the following sub questions:

1. How can we use experience in other professional fields to decide what should be the format and content of a practical guide?
2. How can audit methods be used for assessment of success factors and effects?
3. How can we construct a prototype and evaluate its format and content?
4. How can we summarize the format and content of the finalised guide in written instructions on how to use the guide and in guidelines for assessment and evaluation before, during and after an LSI, and how can we enhance the use of the guide by adding specific tools and examples?

By answering these questions and by creating the practical guide, this study aims at the following objectives:

1. To contribute to existing insight into effects of participative interventions for change and learning
2. To contribute to existing insight into the relation between effects and the characteristics of LSI-trajectories
3. To help improve the practice of LSI and specifically help to foster sustainable change through LSI
4. To contribute to knowledge about evaluative research of participative change approaches
5. To contribute to sustainable change in organising, in order to deal with complex issues.

3.2 My life as an ecologist and bricoleur

What we view determines what we do (Chia, 1996; Weick, 1995)

Every study is subject of the impact of the researcher's previous work (Stern, 2007)

To answer the research questions, new knowledge has to be developed in a scientific process. Bateson (2002) noticed a lack of knowledge of the presuppositions not only of science but also of everyday life. He states (2002, p. 23): "Science, like art, religion, commerce, warfare, and even sleep is based on presuppositions". It is important to have knowledge of our presuppositions, to have knowledge of knowledge, and to know basics of philosophy of science (Bateson, 2002; Cornelis, 1993; Stacey, 2003).

Presuppositions of scientists determine science
Science is different from most other branches of human activity in that not only are the pathways of scientific thought determined by the presuppositions of the scientists, but their goals are the testing and revision of old ones and creation of new (Bateson, 2002, p. 23).

My own stance, or more correctly walking path in life, has consequences for selection of concepts and methods. How do I see 'reality'? What are data? Any narrative depends upon the perspective and location of its author (Hatch, 1997). If logic/worldview is the foundation of reasoning and methodology, then it becomes necessary to describe my own stance, my 'logic in use'. Therefore, before discussing my selection of concepts and methods, I want to say something about my background and how I ended up writing this book.

My perspective is that of a female Dutch (West-European) practitioner-researcher of organisational change, trained in biological as well as organisational research, who has taught biology in secondary schools, and is now occupied with participative approaches for organisational change as a facilitator, as trainer of consultants, as researcher, supervisor of students, and writer of handbooks and guides (Zouwen, 2005b, 2010a; Zouwen & Strobosch, 2005a).

I was born in The Netherlands, in Utrecht in 1956 as the youngest of five children in a white middle-class family of Protestant persuasion. As a child, I was fascinated by the differences among plants and animals. I enjoyed tinkering and experimenting. In 1973, I began studying biology, first at the University of Utrecht, and later at the University of Leiden. I graduated with a Bachelors in Ecology and a Masters in Ecology and Environmental Policy, with a teaching qualification. I developed an eye for detail, as studying biology is one continuous exercise in observation and classification.

After graduating in 1980, I dedicated myself to administering learning processes and developing curricula in various institutions for secondary education. Over time, I learned a lot about dealing with people and careful organisation and direction of practical lessons. Between 1985 and 1988, I became the proud mother of three children.

I really wanted to be a researcher. But in 1980, environmentalism was not *en vogue* yet, and almost no one would pay you to do ecological research. Only in 1981, I held a temporary six-month position as a scientific researcher at Staatsbosbeheer (the Dutch Forestry Commission). As a field biologist, I was wading with boots through the mud along the streams of South Limburg Province, to study the impact of fertilizers (yes, even back then) on species of rare riverbank vegetation higher up on the slopes.

After ten years of education, I was beginning to get a feeling for teaching, but I wanted more. In 1990, I became a consultant. I started off as environmental expert and via environmental and quality management auditor, I developed into an organisational consultant for change processes.

Projects which I directed as an organisational consultant were enacted at governmental environment ministries. For instance: introduction of quality management, research into the development and maintenance of environmental legislation. At that time, I also conducted research into practical experiences of SMEs with environmental laws. This resulted in the first major rift in my scientific approach and attitude. However, I did already have some doubts (how often were hypotheses adjusted post hoc in order to make them fit observations?). How can it be that the elegantly devised, solidly constructed rules or management systems often work so poorly in practice? This prompted my decision, after requesting their brochure three years in a row, to begin, and complete, the Masters programme in Change Management at Sioo.

In late November of 2002, I took the plunge: I quit my job at a big accountancy firm to be my own boss. Since January of 2003, I have been working as a self-employed consultant, guiding organisations and networks in developing their change capacities. I do this in the role of consultant, facilitator, coach, trainer, or researcher. Common goals are: to create new connections by bringing together people and ideas, use participative change approaches and to promote familiarity with interactive methods. The latter is achieved via practical training such as Large Scale Interventions facilitator training, workshops and conferences, and creation of informative websites and other publications (Zouwen, 2005b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Zouwen & Strobosch, 2005a; Zouwen & Viergever, 2003).

I see it as a challenge to find balance between my family, work, friends, and hobbies. The experiences that Charles Handy describes in his book *The elephant and the flea* (Handy, 2001) resonate with me. I enjoy being a self-willed, creative freelancer, who strives to develop things that make a difference: writing, contributing something, helping to develop capacities, creating something new by bringing different disciplines together (such as ecology, didactics, systems thinking, and learning processes in organisations). I try to develop 'bricolage', the ability to create order out of whatever is at hand (Weick, 1993).

Since January of 2008, I have been affiliated with Tilburg University as an external PhD student of Jac Geurts. Finally, I have become a researcher of ecology. The system under study changed from *natural systems* to *work systems*. Using the principles of Naturalistic Inquiry I recognise many similarities between ecological and organisational studies. In fact, I think there are no real differences (see Section 3.3). Since 2009, I have been sharing my insights as supervisor with Master students Organisation Studies at Tilburg University by guiding them in doing qualitative research on interactive interventions such as Large Scale Interventions.

It is upon all of these experiences that I draw in presenting my research journey into the field of LSI practice. As Mary Jo Hatch states in the preface of her book on organisation theory (Hatch, 1997), unavoidable biases with regard to LSI and its history have been created by these particular experiences, and thus the book you are holding has been influenced in ways that are difficult for me to specify. It is certainly not the one and only truth.

Limitations of theories
All theories of organisation and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that persuade us to see, understand, and imagine situations in partial ways. Metaphors create insight. But they also distort. They have strengths. But they also have limitations. In creating ways of seeing, they create ways of *not* seeing (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Morgan, 1986).

3.3 A pragmatist stance

Walking on the two legs of scientific understanding and practical experience

It will come as no surprise that as a biologist doing research in organisations I am inspired by books written by biologists occupied with knowledge development. What I learned from them is that science, as well as any human activity, cannot be separated from our bodies and inherited social preoccupations (Bateson, 2002; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991; Waal, 2005). All doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing, and everything said is said by someone (Maturana & Varela, 1992, p. 27).

My view on the research journey is best typified by the saying of Francisco Varela *Scientific understanding and practical experience are like two legs without which we cannot walk* (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991 p. 14).

The Real World
This view implies that there is no such thing as The Real World, that we are bound by our biological capabilities. Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela (1987, p. 23) point out: "Our experience is moored to our structure in a binding way. We do not see 'the space' of the world; we live our field of vision. We do not see the 'colours' of the world; we live our chromatic space….. We cannot separate our history of actions- biological and social-from how this world appears to us."

Knowing and theorising are social acts

As a consequence, knowing and theorising are social acts. We carve our objectives, and thereby our reality, out of this world for a reason, and bound by the constraints of our biological body. The carving out is a social act, a mutual shaping of actor and object, making theorising a social process (Bohm, 1980; Chia, 1996; Gergen, 2005; Weick, 1995; Zeeuw, 1991). For me this implies there is basically no difference between theory and practice. I see theory as a more abstract form of practice. Theory is a way of asking that is guided by a reasonable answer (Wolcott, 2001, p. 81). Facts are generally accepted constructions in our time and space, with a high predictability of characteristics. This makes reality fluid and interactive, and includes the possibility of different perspectives of different actors, although more often than not perspectives will overlap or are in many aspects identical (Strübing, 2007, p. 584).

Organisation theories as 'organised bodies of knowledge claims'
"Organisation theories are academic products produced within the context of socially legitimized public institutions which are themselves effects of priory organising processes. They are, therefore, first and foremost socially 'organised bodies of knowledge claims'. One way is to view the process of intellectual inquiry as a journey without a destination. Seen in this light, theories therefore, are but 'vehicles' or modes of transportation through which we embark upon our journey upstream. We are enriched not by the realization that we have somehow 'arrived' at the 'source' of knowledge, but by the rich diversity of insights and 'discoveries' we happen to have encountered along the way" (Chia, 1996, p. 220).

3.4 Naturalistic Inquiry: Looking for patterns that connect rather than linear causality

The research approach is based on my pragmatic stance, as described in Section 3.3, where it is allowed to adopt multiple ideologies and perspectives. Use of multiple viewpoints is vital to present a rich enough picture of LSI practice. The rigour of scientific understanding and the multiple views of practical experience determine my selection of methods and the research design.

In intervention research controlled studies are impossible, because no two situations are the same (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010c). Furthermore, it is unethical to experiment in real-life situations with large groups to do a quantitative 'one variable experiment'. So we need a research approach able to deal with multiple variables, taking the richness of 'everyday life' into account.

A research approach that combines observations and testimonials in a Social System can be categorized as a field study of the 'fourth generation evaluation' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In my research I have followed the guidelines of Erlandson et al. (1993), and defined the approach as a 'Naturalistic Inquiry'.

Inquiry implies a circular model of problem-solving processes (Strübing, 2007, p. 590). Theory emerges from the data and data emerges for theory, as illustrated in Figure 3-2. In my opinion, this model applies to all knowledge development.

This research into LSI practice is guided by the question "What data available to measure effectiveness of LSI for bringing about sustainable?" Rousseau, Manning & Denyer (2008, p. 478) state: "A systematic synthesis musters the full and comprehensive body of available evidence to provide the best available answer to a question of interest". Both published and unpublished experiences should be incorporated. Systematic means: comprehensive accumulation, transparent analysis, and reflective interpretation of all empirical studies pertinent to a specific question. This implies that a synthesis of effectiveness of LSI has to be made as broad as possible. The data will be gathered in the field, the site will be on the level of 'the practice of LSI'.

Quite differently to experimental or quantitative research, in Naturalistic Inquiry the research design emanates from the research itself. Science is seen as careful and precise looking and analys-

ing, to discover relation between parts, the 'patterns that connect', looking for a deeper symmetry in formal relations (Bateson, 2002; Erlandson, et al., 1993).

Look at your fish: Careful and precise looking for patterns that connect
While reading Bateson's book *Mind and Nature* (Bateson, 2002, pp. 7-9), I suddenly realise why Naturalistic Inquiry appeals to me. Bateson tells the story of an experiment similar to the one in the opening story of Erlandson et al. (1993, p. 1), called 'Look at your fish'. During my Masters Change Management, we used to call this Erlandson's 'Look at your fish' principle. Let me tell you a quick story. During research training, a student is asked to look at a fish and report to his professor what he sees. He sits at his table, just looking at the fish. After a full day and part of the next morning following many isolated observations, he discovers a pattern: the fish is symmetrical. Great, says the professor. Now look some more. What relations do you see to other patterns? Bateson describes a similar experiment, showing his students a crab. By careful and precise looking, they discover a deeper symmetry in formal relations between parts of the claws, despite the asymmetry of the size of the claws. Naturalistic Inquiry appeals to me because I have been 'looking at fish' during my biology study and practice for years, searching for patterns.

3.5 Researcher and data in Naturalistic Inquiry

Induction, deduction, abduction

The new can be plucked from nowhere but the random. It requires a selective mechanism to determine what will last (Gregory Bateson, 2002, p. 41)

Pragmatists say reality becomes such only insofar and as long as it is part of the environment within which actors act (Strübing, 2007, p. 583). Therefore, data are a potential representation of parts of reality at a certain point in time, of a reality that is under construction.

Science is a way of perceiving and making 'sense' of our perceptions. However, perception operates only upon difference. All receipt of information is necessarily the receipt of news of difference, and all perception of difference is limited by threshold. Differences too slight or too slowly presented are not perceivable. Some processes, mostly in the natural system, are so slow that they appear to be unchanging facts. Our perception of nature is highly defined by our biological capacities and constraints and our unconscious perceptions of the world. This is inherited from our evolution as social species (Bateson, 2002, p. 27; Waal, 2005). Nevertheless, on an evolutionary timescale everything changes.

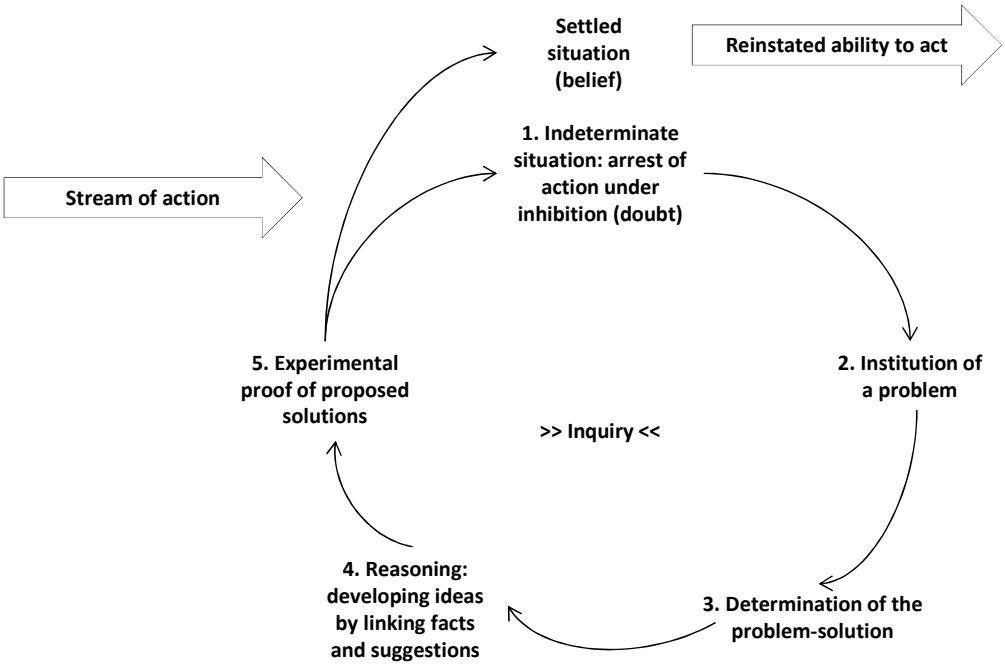


Figure 3-1: Iterative-cyclical problem-solving according to Dewey.
Source: The Sage Handbook by GTM (Strübing, 2007, p. 591)

Naturalistic Inquiry has many similarities to the Grounded Theory Method. New theory is developed to improve practice. Data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and each informs and streamlines the other (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1). The process has inductive, deductive and abductive types of inference in order to form new theory and insights, as shown in Figure 3-1. First, there is an indeterminate situation. This is what pragmatist John Dewey (Strübing, 2007, p. 592) calls an 'arrest of action under inhibition'. An example would be my doubt and puzzlement experienced in my own LSI practice (see Section 2.1). In an inductive process, a problem is instituted, in this case the effectiveness of LSI, leading to research questions and hypothesis. From prior knowledge of LSI, theoretical concepts and methods, next steps are selected in a deductive process.

However, the pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce argued that pure induction and pure deduction are necessarily sterile. New ideas result from a combination of these fundamental approaches, which he termed 'abduction' (Suddaby, 2006, p. 639). Abduction is the process by which a researcher moves between deduction of prior knowledge of concepts and hypothesis, to induction of building new concepts and categories, by using the constant comparison method. In this

research journey, the 'empirical process under scrutiny' is the practice of LSI. The evolving theory is about guidelines for effective use of LSI.

Figure 3-2 shows how following the iterative-cyclic process of problem solving, using inductive, deduction and abductive inferences, leads to a growing conceptual level of the evolving theory about the effectiveness of LSI.

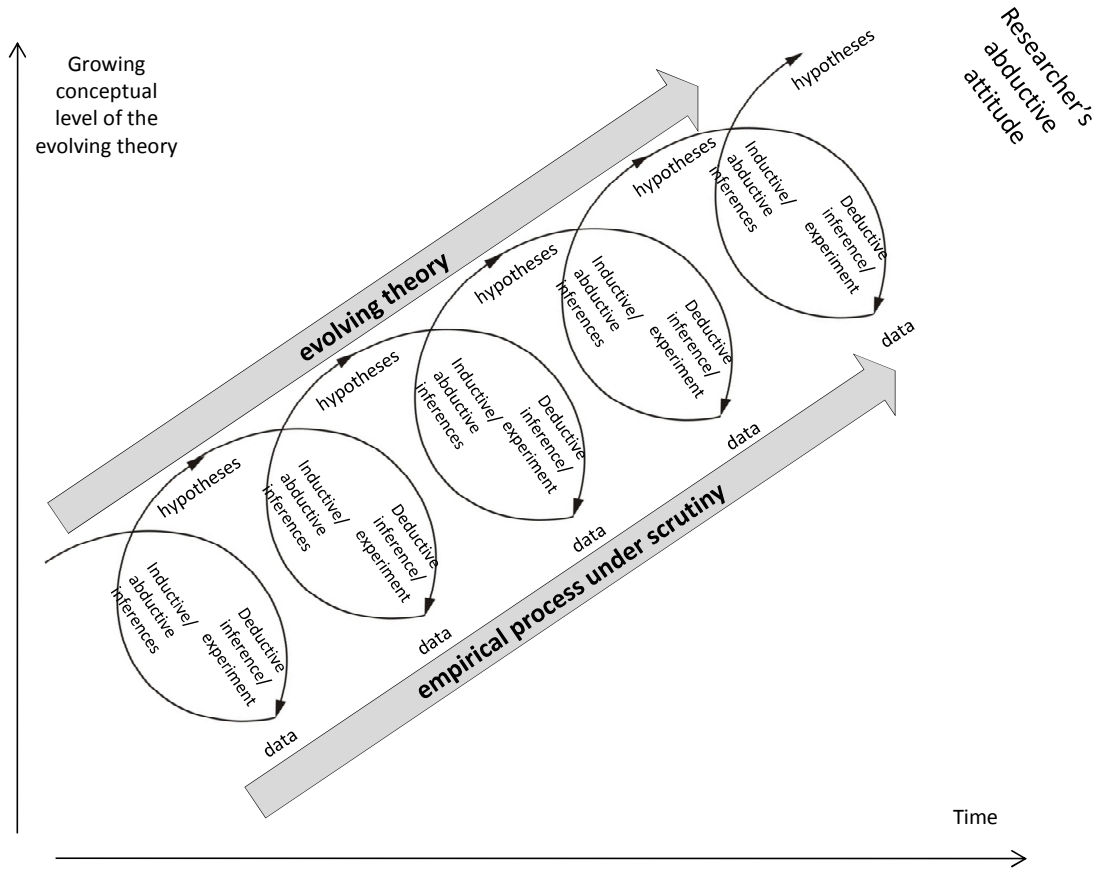


Figure 3-2: Logic of inquiry in grounded theory.
Source: The Sage Handbook by Grounded Theory (Strübing, 2007, p. 595)

What is abduction?
Gregory Bateson (2002) invites scientists to look at things with a fresh eye. He defines abduction as the lateral extension of abstract components of description (2002, p. 133). The phenomenon is far more widespread than we might have supposed at first. He mentions as instances of abduction, or aggregates of instances of abduction within the human mental sphere: Metaphor, dream, parable, allegory, the whole of art, the whole of science, and the whole of religion. Any change in our epistemology will involve shifting our whole system of ab-

duction. “Every abduction may be seen as a double or multiple description of some object or event or sequence” (Bateson, 2002, p. 134).
Anthony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz say (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 16): “Abductive inference entails considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data, and pursuing the most plausible explanation.” The pragmatist Charles S. Peirce found out that neither deductive nor inductive inference is logically capable of producing new knowledge (Deetz, 1996; Strübing, 2007, p. 589). Creative processes have their point of departure in the early phase of perception, where we sometimes need to literally ‘make sense’ of that material which does not ‘fit into our pre-established (learned) perceptual categories. This is the moment, Peirce contends, when a non-intentional, non-forcible, spontaneous insight comes upon the actor ‘like lightning’.

Role of the researcher

As Figure 3-2 shows, the abductive attitude of the researcher plays an important role in the evolvement of theory. Data do not speak for themselves; the researcher engages data in a conversation. They are selected parts of the whole for a reason (Bohm, 1980; Zeeuw, 1991). Exemplary research using grounded theory also requires considerable exposure to the empirical context or subject area of research.

The constant comparative method requires an enduring relation with the site
Roy Suddaby refers to the words of Straus & Corbin (Suddaby, 2006, p. 640): “Contradicting prevalent ideals of scientific detachment from context, the constant comparative method implies an intimate and enduring relation between researcher and site. Because of this close and longstanding connection, the personality, experience and character of a researcher become important components of the research process and should be made an explicit part of the analysis.”

I see my role continuously switching between a ‘distanced observer’ making dispassionate analyses, and an engaged consultant, a stakeholder in LSI practice. This makes me an interpreter of the scene, rather than the ultimate authority defining it, trying to bridge defined realities and interpretations of them. Prolonged engagement is established through membership of worldwide networks in the field of LSI, and my own practice as facilitator and trainer of LSI processes.

Data gathering and closure: When is it enough?

There is no absolute certainty, only ‘closure for action’ (Francisco Varela)

In Naturalistic Inquiry, everything is ‘data’. Everything I observe, read, hear, smell, and feel about LSI, as well as what I already know from my studies and my life experience, is data. I act as an interpreter of the scene, and as such, I make it come to life for the reader. I grow it (Stern, 2007, p. 115). Literature is used in a movement back and forth, to get an idea of the current theoretical conversation on interventions for organisational change to analyse the state of the art of LSI. Theory is viewed a specific form of practice, more abstract, and with observations in other media.

If everything is data, when will enough data be gathered to answer the research questions? On the level of 'LSI practice' saturation can never be reached. Development of the conceptual level is ongoing, as Figure 3-2 illustrates. According to Maurice Punch (1985) ever deeper levels of meaning and insights will be reached the longer you stay in the field. Moreover, there is no ultimate truth. So, when is it enough? For practical reasons closure will be reached when plausible and usable answers to the research questions are given, within the boundaries of available time and resources (Zeeuw, 1991). Whether answers are plausible and usable is up to the judgement of stakeholders, which I see as practitioners and clients of LSI, and researchers and students of interventions for organisational change.

3.6 Quality criteria and implications for design and performance of the research

What typifies a Naturalistic Inquiry? The principles underlying my project also produce the quality criteria. These principles are:

- In a Naturalistic Inquiry (NI), findings are created, not discovered, in a joint effort of the emergent constructions
- NI is successful in terms of the commitment it fosters and the action it stimulates
- Commitment is measured by the extent to which it is shared by most stakeholders (bought into)
- The formal inquirer is but the *primus inter pares*, a first among equals
- NI has a dynamic character: each factor can be cause as well as effect
- NI results in a grounded, emergent theory
- Tacit knowledge (including intuitions, apprehensions, feelings) is treated on an equal basis with propositional knowledge
- The researcher is the primary research instrument
- NI is built on data derived from the key human sources enriched with data from documents and records (exploring interviews, documents, observations, artefacts of interest)
- Language shapes experience: the language we speak determines what we experience and in turn is driven by the categories we construct to make sense out of the world we experience
- Communication depends on shared constructions, shared constructions shape relationships
- The goal of NI is to honour and empower, not finding the (one) truth; truth is negotiated; negotiation is about how 'truth' will be determined, how it will be communicated, and how error will be detected and corrected
- Naturalistic Inquiry publication need to be written in such a way that they make sense to the audience (Stern, 2007, p. 115).

A difficulty in reporting a Naturalistic Inquiry is that the linear character of writing and reading does not fit the iterative-cyclical character in which the research design develops, making it hard

to choose what to present when. In Naturalistic Inquiry, the research design remains tentative until it is implemented. I will try to deal with this by 'showing the baby' first, and describe the 'labour' with details on methods and activities in subsequent chapters. The research design will be fully presented in Section 3.8.

In this type of research trustworthiness is established by credibility, applicability, consistency and neutrality (Erlandson, et al., 1993; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Figure 3-3 shows the techniques used in this research to meet these quality criteria. The criteria are derived from the principles of Naturalistic Inquiry. In the text boxes of Figure 3-3, the criteria are compared to those commonly used in linear research approaches. The techniques and actual research process will be further explained in Chapters 6 - 8, and the research process will be critically assessed in Chapter 15. In these chapters, I will frequently refer to the criteria of Figure 3-3, which will be discussed next.

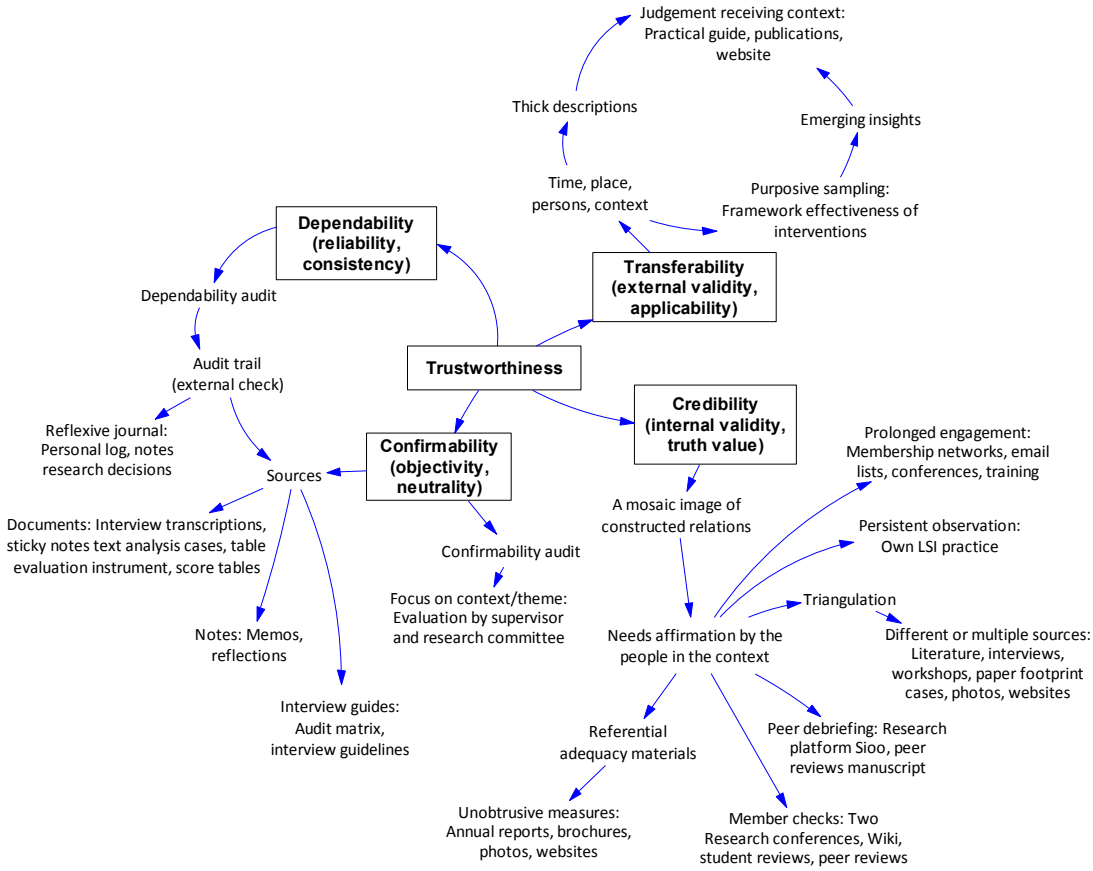


Figure 3-3: Techniques used to establish trustworthiness in the Naturalistic Inquiry on the effectiveness of LSI

Credibility (internal validity, truth value)

As stated by Erlandson et al. (1993), credibility revolves around the idea of interpreting the constructed realities that exist in the context being researched. People in the context of this study are practitioners and researchers of LSI, and peer consultants and researchers of other approaches for organisational change. To ensure that valid interpretations were made, I took on the role as participant-observer, through prolonged engagement in networks of LSI-practitioners, and through persistent observation of experiences in my own LSI-practice. Furthermore, I made use of triangulation using multiple methods to find indicators for success factors and effects of LSI in multiple sources (see Chapter 6). To check the validity of my interpretations member checks were held, by sharing and discussing results in a Wiki on the internet, through organising two Research Conferences with stakeholders (see Chapter 8), and through reviews of peers and students. I participated for seven years in a research platform of the interuniversity institute Sioo, discussing research designs and performing peer reviews with people doing academic research in their own practice. Peer and student reviews contributed to the quality of the reports.

Transferability (external validity, applicability)

The search for data has been constructed based on purposive sampling. This requires a procedure that is governed by emerging insights about what is relevant to the study. I used a given model for research on the effectiveness of interventions. This model provides categories for gathering as well as analysing the data. This framework will be discussed in Section 3.7.

To ensure transferability I have tried to bring the reader as close to the research journey as possible, by providing thick descriptions of cases, photos and illustrative examples, and by sharing my experiences and emerging insights in reflections and recommendations. The results are disseminated in the receiving context as structured practical guides, publications in journals (Zouwen, 2010b), and on a multimedia website (Zouwen, 2010a).

Dependability (reliability, consistency)

Dependability, focusing on traceable variance is controlled by ensuring that the process used to gather the data, has been written down for use in a dependability audit trail (Erlandson, et al., 1993). In my research project, this has been done by keeping a reflexive journal with personal notes on research decisions, by documenting observations and text analyses on sticky-notes, through recording and transcribing interviews, and documenting the development of an instrument for evaluation in tables. Scoring of evaluations in the case study can be traced back through case documentation such as interview guidelines, and an audit matrix of each case.

Confirmability (objectivity, neutrality)

Objectivity is an illusion when conducting research within the notion that no methodology can be really separated from those who created and selected it (Erlandson, et al., 1993; Patton, 2001). In

a NI this criterion should be interpreted as 'inter-subjectivity' and 'openness to reliability controls'. The project has to create an 'audit trail' via systematic and self-documenting processes, thus establishing confirmability.

The value of interpretive research
Ralph Stacey and Douglas Griffin state in their book *A Complexity Perspective on Researching Organizations. Taking experience seriously* (Stacey & Griffin, 2005, p. 27): "Clearly, there can be no objective validity for the obvious reason that the research is an interpretation, a subjective reflection on personal experience. However, it is not an arbitrary account in that it must make sense to others, resonate with the experience of others and be persuasive to them. Furthermore, it must be justifiable in terms of a wider tradition of thought that the community being addressed finds persuasive, or at least plausible. The value of this kind of research, we would claim, is that it presents accounts of what people actually experience in their organizational practice with all its uncertainty, emotion and messiness, rather than highly rational, decontextualized accounts and their hindsight view."

3.7 Research model: An analytical framework for interventions

What can interventionists learn from my study and what can I learn from studies on other interactive intervention techniques? These questions fit in the research activities on participative methodologies of the Department of Organisation Studies of Tilburg University in the Netherlands (Admiraal-Hilgeman, 2009; Bongers, 2000; Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007; Geurts, Caluwé, & Stoppelenburg, 2000; Heyne, 2000; Mayer, 1997; Sondeijker, 2009). In this Department, a model has been developed and tested for research on the relation between elements of an intervention and effectiveness. I will use this model as a framework for the research process. Figure 3-4 shows the model as a causal model with four independent categories of variables (Context, Client, Consultant, and Interventions process), and one dependent variable: Effectiveness. The category 'Intervention' is specified in four concepts that constitute an intervention: Conceptualisation, Methods, Loading, and Operations. They form the building blocks of the category. In Figure 3-4, the category Intervention is filled in for LSI, the focus of my research project. Conceptualisation comprises the theoretical concepts and relations, often grouped in theory, which selects and steers the methods used. Methods consists of all the Prescriptions, Aids (or tools), and Procedures that set up LSI as participative approach for change. The Conceptualisation and Methods of LSI will be discussed in Chapter 0 . The concept Loading refers to the fact that every intervention is different. The methods are worked out in a unique design with 'loading'-steps for a specific LSI case. Operations form the activities of a specific LSI, the steps 'brought to life'. It includes all activities (usually performed outside the normal work), all actions and events directly connected to the intervention, both intended and unplanned (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007, p. 319). The intervention results in learning experiences for participants, leading to new insights.

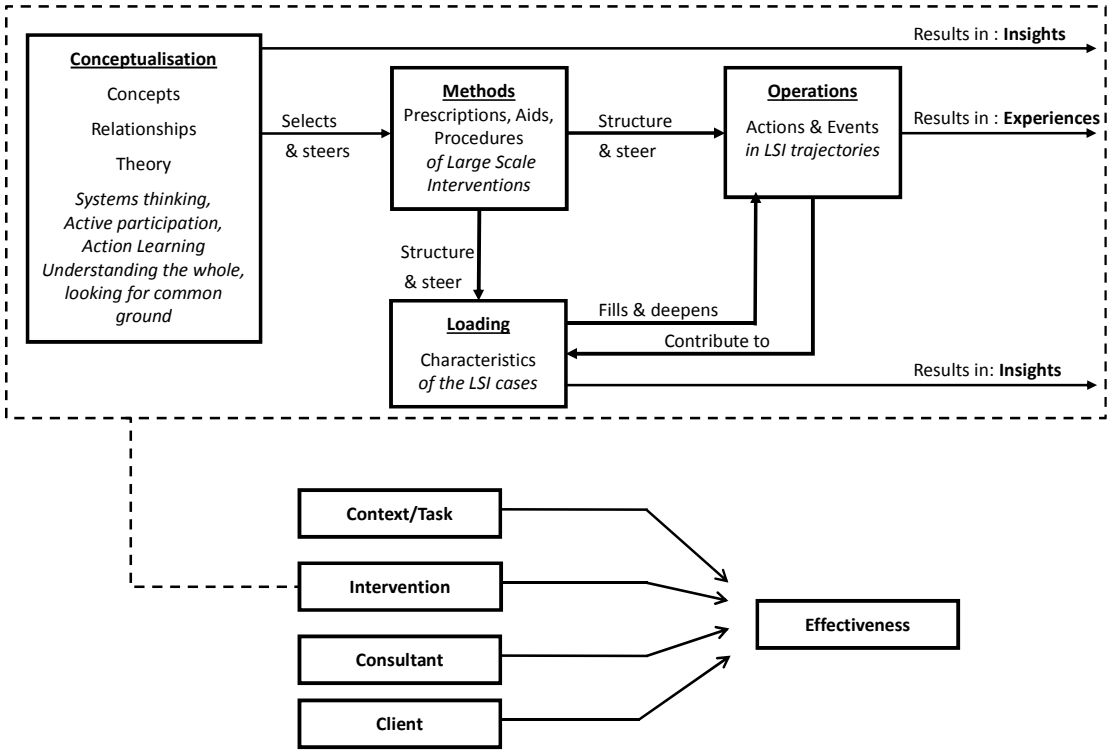


Figure 3-4: Relations between elements of an intervention and effectiveness; research model of Geurts et al. (2007), filled in for LSI

Following the research model, the line of argument for designing the research process of building a practical guide is as follows:

1. LSI can be effective for sustainable change, when applied under the right conditions and when performed right. This assumption is based on prior research and extensive experience (see Section 4.2)
2. Sustainable change means development of communicative self-steering, as defined in Chapter 5
3. Sustainable change can be observed in LSI trajectories as second-order effects in collective learning and building capacity for change
4. Certain conditions must exist for sustainable change, LSI has to be applied in 'the right way'
5. Criteria for 'the right way', the success factors, lie in the Context, the Intervention, the Consultant and the Client.

3.8 Research design

So far, we have developed a view on science, a research approach, a conceptual model for intervention effectiveness, and a set of quality criteria for the research design. There remains the making of a concrete plan of what to do and when and how to do it.

Figure 3-5 presents the research design, showing the connected steps taken in my research project. On the left, the main parts of the journey are named: Preparing the research, Embedding & Positioning, Assessing & (Re)design, Testing & Improving, and Harvesting. Each part consists of one or more phases, labelled by the main questions, and followed by the corresponding Chapters of this book. The underlined subtitle provides the main goal of the phase, followed by a summary of main steps or results.

The main research question is “When and how is LSI effective for sustainable change?” To answer this question, several sub-questions were formulated in Section 3.1. The research design provides the steps and methods taken to answer these questions. In Figure 3-5 the stages and questions answered seem to be separated, while in fact the same steps are iterated with different methods in different stages of the research project. As discussed in Sections 3.4 and 3.5, the research design developed in an iterative cyclic process. Data gathering and analyses inform each other to develop answers to the research question. Methods used are:

1. Literature review
2. Open interviews
3. Observations
4. Workshops with group discussion
5. Text analysis of reported LSIs
6. Retrospective case study with cases of past LSIs
7. Interactive Research Conference as member check.

These methods will be further discussed in later chapters as indicated in Figure 3-5. An overview of activities and results in each phase is given in the Research Plan of Appendix 5.

Research Design

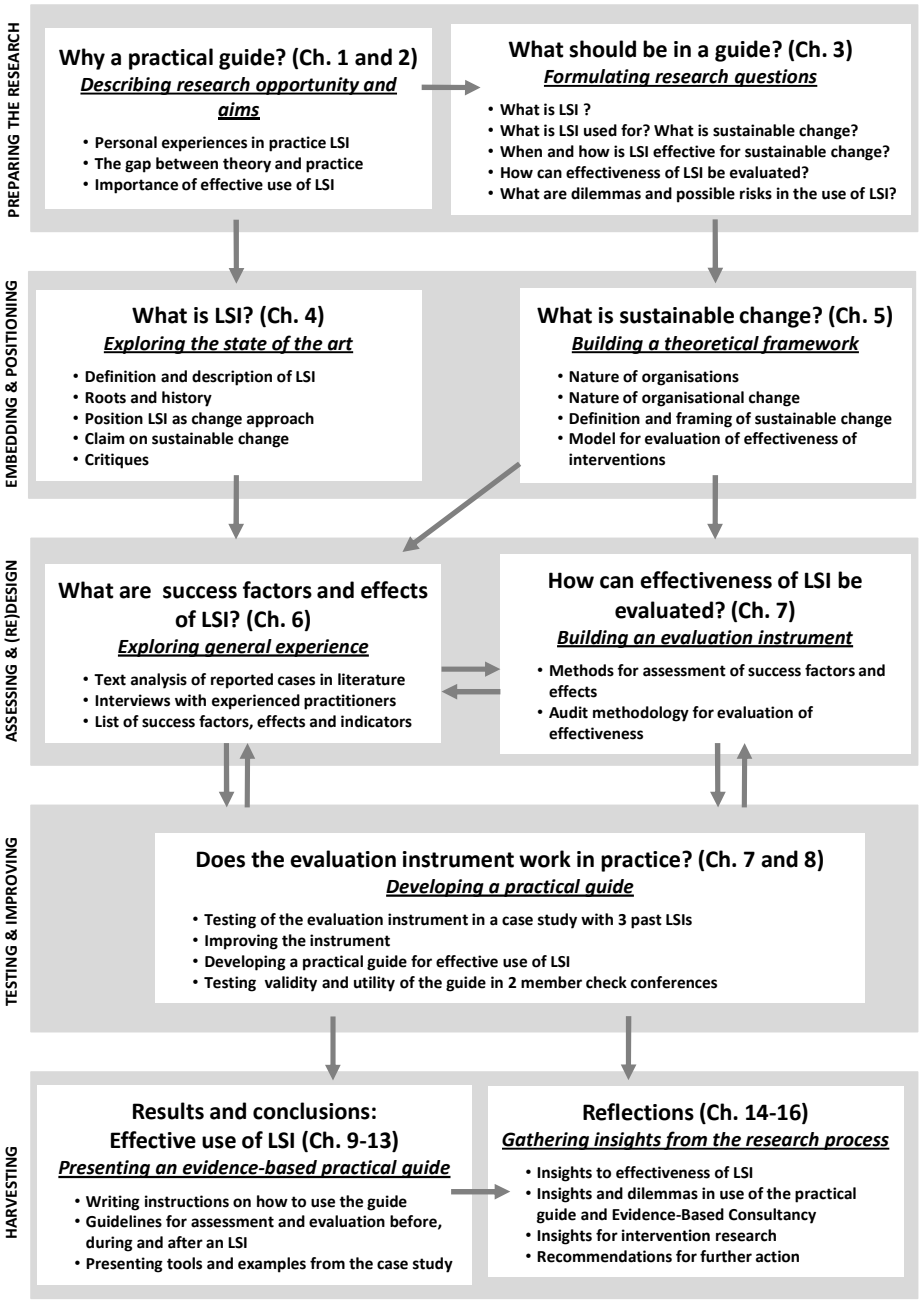


Figure 3-5: Research design with references to relevant Chapters

3.9 The journey begins

Where do we stand by now? Before taking off, let us make an inventory to see if the journey is well prepared. The research approach can be described as applied social science, an empirical field study, using a Naturalistic Inquiry methodology. The field study comprises a mix of methods for data gathering and analyses, mostly qualitative but some quantitative, both inductive, deductive, and abductive. The approach for organising and reporting the data is an analytical framework approach: the research model provides a matrix to guide data collection as well as analyses (Patton, 2001, p. 470). The *modus operandi* is like that of a detective: the detective observes some patterns, looks for evidence in cases, evidence is compared to the patterns, filling the empty cells of the matrix (Patton, 2001, p. 471).

Research with mixed design is hard to classify
Personal log, 8 February 2010: Reading the introduction of the Handbook by Grounded Theory brings me great relief. Before, I found myself puzzled about how to typify my method. In searching for the right labels, I came across an array of categorizations that seemed to fit, despite being all more or less different. In the introduction, I find an honest and thorough description of how almost every aspect of the Grounded Theory Method (treatment of data, categories, concepts, use of literature) is viewed differently by users. Even what the 'crucial aspects' are, is a point of discussion. Does this recognition make it easier to classify my research? On the one hand, Yes, I can pick one classification from the wide variety. On the other hand No, I have to reflect on the other 'classifications' and why I choose a specific one.

Let us go. The first research question to be answered is: "What is LSI exactly?" The next Chapter will go deeply into the state-of-the-art of LSI.

Part 2: The search for a practical guide

4 What is LSI? Exploring the state of the art

4.1 Definition of LSI

This chapter introduces the intervention approach that is the central topic of this research journey. From an exploration of the field (including an extensive literature study) interviews with developers and practitioners, prolonged engagement in networks, I have composed a historical and actual overview, a description of the state of the art of LSI. From my point of view as a practitioner and researcher of participative organisational change, LSI practice is synthesized on the level of principles and working elements, beyond specific Large Group Methods.

What theoretical concepts is LSI rooted in? What are basic principles and underlying assumptions? What does the LSI family look like? What distinguishes LSI from other change approaches? What trends can be seen in current practice? I will answer these questions using the vocabulary of developers and practitioners as found while exploring the field. I will end this chapter with a critical reflection on the state of the art and the claim for sustainable change. Perspectives of critics will be involved, as stepping-stones to the next episode in this journey: what evidence needs to be found for sustainable change and how can this be done?

The first thing that struck me after diving into the literature is that it is hard to find out what LSI is exactly (Bryson & Anderson, 2000, p. 36). The intervention is part of a wider family of participative approaches used to involve people in change processes. LSI itself embraces a rather diverse family of methods for working with large groups, the Large Group Intervention (LGI) methods that share some basic principles. The key similarity is that these methods deliberately involve a critical mass of the people affected by the change, both inside and outside the organisation. The interventions are defined by 'Whole system interactive events' (Bunker & Alban, 1997).

Each LGI method is consequently associated with the 'founders' and comprises a fairly complex collection of concepts, procedures, tools, and techniques. Most require highly skilled facilitators, which adds even more complexity to a particular method, as each facilitator adds a particular twist to the LGI method in practice (Bryson & Anderson, 2000). To make things even more complex there are different definitions and names for the same phenomenon. Table 4-1 gives an overview of synonyms found in literature and on the internet for Large Scale Interventions, with associated regions and references of relevant authors.

Table 4-1 Synonyms for Large Scale Interventions, with references

Synonym	Region	References
Large Scale Interventions	American, Dutch	(Jacobs, 1997; Nistelrooij & Wilde, 2008; Wilde & Geverink, 2001)
Large Scale Organizational Change	American	(Manning & Binzagr, 1996; Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998; Waclawski, 2002)
Large Scale Technology	American	(Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992)
Whole-Scale Change™	American	(Dannemiller-Tyson-Associates, 2000a; Jacobs, 1997)
Whole Systems Working	British	(Pedler, et al., 2003)
Whole Systems Approach™	American	(C. Adams & Adams, 1999)
Large Group Interventions	American	(Bunker & Alban, 1997; Holman & Devane, 1999; Leith, 2004)
Large Scale Systems Change	American	(Brown, 2001)
Großgruppen Arbeit	German	(Bonsen, Bauer, Bredemeyer, & Herzog, 2003; Königswieser & Keil, 2000)

It may seem LSI is what you define as LSI, but all phenomena of Table 4-1 share some basic principles (Holman & Devane, 1999; Weisbord, 2004a; Wilde & Geverink, 2001). Since my practice is rooted in the Dutch tradition, I chose the term Large Scale Intervention, with the following definition:

> *A Large Scale Intervention (LSI) is a trajectory for change or learning in which stakeholders of the whole system (organisation or community and its context) are invited to contribute at all stages of the trajectory. On one or more occasions, the whole system is invited into one room, to address strategic issues.*

The large scale notion addresses both the 'whole system' scale, with large numbers of people involved possible, as well as seeing change processes in their larger context in time and space. Intervention is defined as deliberate action for change.

In this definition the interventions with (a significant representation of) the whole system in the room, the LGIs, are embedded in a bigger change process, the LSI trajectory. Although LGIs are also used as stand-alone events, the focus of this study is the claim that the LGI(s) act as catalysts in a process for sustainable change, causing a transition (Bunker & Alban, 1997; Holman & Devane, 1999; Königswieser & Keil, 2000; Leith, 2004; Nistelrooij, 1999; Oels, 2002; Weber, 2005a; Wilde & Geverink, 2001).

What is LSI? Some views and labels found in literature:
- A principle-based action meeting and planning method (Weisbord, 2008)
- A specific philosophy of facilitation, a hands-off approach that enables people to take responsibility for themselves, making it a structural approach rather than behavioural (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a)
- LGI is a catalyst in a transition (Bunker & Alban, 1997)
- An incubator in which directional, contextual, relational, and task-coherence dimensions can ripen and evolve (Barbeau & Aronson, 2006)
- LGI as rite de passage (Senge, 1999; Weber, 2005b)
- A means to build learning bridges between those in power and the other voices in our society so that something new can emerge (Tan & Brown, 2005)
- A process of teaching people to work with a set of principles, to break the cycle of dependency on consultants (R. H. Axelrod & Axelrod, 2006)
- A process for social capital development; a goal-oriented effort, to create better working relations and prevent conflict (Hasle & Møller, 2007, p. 424)
- A new paradigm beyond change management (Nistelrooij & Wilde, 2008).

First, I will describe the roots and history of LSI in Section 4.2. In Section 4.3 I will go deeper into the basic principles and their consequences for the characteristics of an LSI trajectory.

4.2 Roots and history of LSI

Four phases of development

The history of LSI is defined by the development of its basic principles and of the LGI methods. This history is described in several books with slightly different accents, but in general, the history can be understood in four episodes of development (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Königswieser & Keil, 2000; Nistelrooij, 1999; Nistelrooij & Wilde, 2008; Weber, 2005a; Weisbord, 2004a). These episodes are:

1. Development of theory and understanding organisational change (1950 – 1980)
2. Early development of LGI methods (1980 – 1993)
3. Growing acceptation and adoption of new LGI methods (1993 – 1997)
4. Diffusion, experimentation and embedding (1997 – present).

In the next Sections, each period will be described briefly. For an extensive overview of the emergence of LSI against the background of developments in organisations theory I refer to the work of Bunker & Alban (1992b, 1997, 2006), Weisbord (2004a), and Pedler et al. (2003).

Development of theory and understanding organisational change (1950 – 1980)

Bunker & Alban (1997) name three intellectual traditions as fundamental: Kurt Lewin's social psychology, Alfred Bion's psychoanalytic theory and Ludwig von Bertalanffy's systems theory as applied to organisations. In his book Productive Workplaces (2004a, first published in 1992) Marvin

Weisbord describes extensively how development of concepts in organisation theory lead to the emergence of whole system Large Group Methods, illustrated with stories about crucial persons, institutes, and incidents. Martin Leith (2004) made a summary of Weisbord's description in the form of a flow diagram. This summary is given in Figure 4-1. It shows the complexity of disciplines and the historical coherence of theories, persons and methods.

Early development of LGI methods (1980 – 1993)

In the 1980s, consultants practicing survey feedback, team building and other strategies for organisational improvements are confronted with limitations of improvement-oriented change processes (Bunker & Alban, 1997). In a fast changing world, with ever-new technologies and stakeholder demands, changing parts of the organisations with a waterfall type of implementation strategy is either too fragmented or just too slow. Transformational change was the new type of change strategy to cope with these dynamics, by changing the whole organisation at once. The notion 'Whole system in the room' came up in Weisbord's book *Discovering Common Ground* (1992), stressing the need for involvement of external stakeholders to rethink what is needed in the fast changing world.

In 1992, Barbara Bunker and Billie Alban initiated and edited a special edition of the Journal of Applied Behavioural Science. It appears in December 1992, with 10 articles on Large Group Interventions. In their concluding article (Bunker & Alban, 1992a) they observe a shift from top-down and incremental change to a whole systems model for organisation development and change. Some of the article titles in the Journal reflect what is new in this whole system model:

- "Getting Everyone Involved: How One Organisation Involved its Employees, Supervisors, and Managers in Redesigning the Organisation" (D. Axelrod, 1992)
- "Changing the Way Organisations Change: A Revolution of Common Sense" (Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992)
- "Designing the Social Architecture of Participation in Large Groups to Effect Organisational Change" (Gilmore & Barnett, 1992).

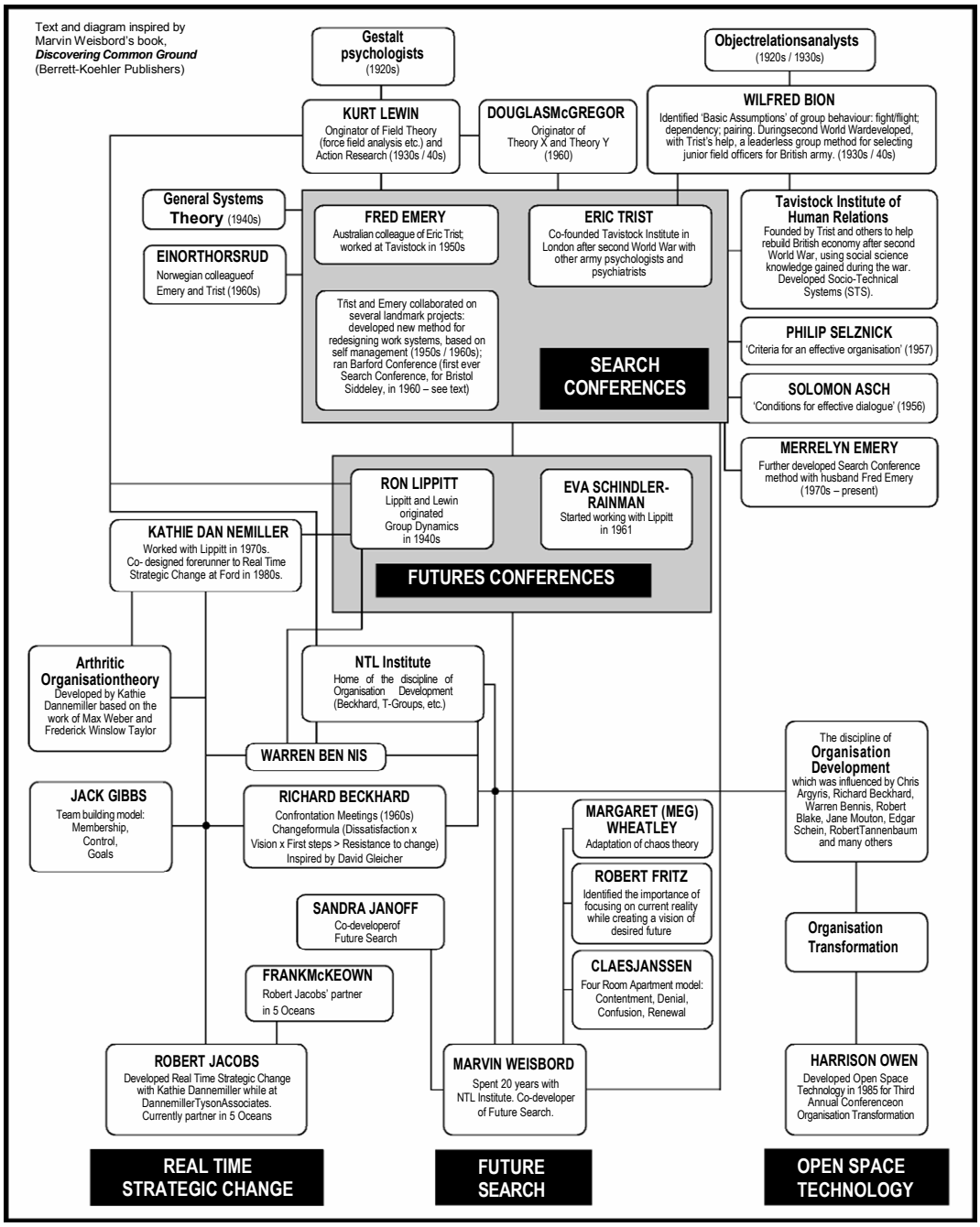


Figure 4-1 History of LSI development, made by Martin Leith (2004); based on Weisbord (1992)

What is a large group?
Systems change using large groups of people held a contrary view to what was normally accepted; that group size and participation were adversely related (Purser & Griffin, 2008, p. 263). However, there is no consensus of when a group is large or small. Some definitions that I have found:
- Steil & Gibbon-Carr (2005, p. 17): Large group means a gathering of 80 to several hundred participants, small group is 8 or fewer.
- Weick (1993, p. 644): It is conventional in the group literature to treat any group of more than 10 people as large. In a small group people communicate directly, in a large group communication is mediated.
- Bunker & Alban (1997): A large group is a group that is too big for face-to face interaction, meaning >30.
- Emery (1992, p. 524): A large group is ± 35 persons. For larger groups parallel search conferences are recommended
- Purser & Griffin (2008): Groups are defined as large groups when it becomes impossible for each group member to maintain eye-to-eye contact, large group dynamics begin once a group exceeds 15 participants.
- Hoebeke (2000, p. 35): A small group is <9, is a creative group; a large group is 9-80, a reflective group; up to 700 is an adaptive group

I see a large group as the plenary group in a meeting of 15 or more people.

Marvin Weisbord sees a social learning curve over the years from 1900 until now (Weisbord, 2004a) from a tendency to rely on experts to solve problems and to improve whole systems, to individuals themselves wanting more control over issues that critically affect their lives. The curve leads through four stages of management (see Figure 4-2).

- 1900 - experts solve problems
- 1950 - ‘everybody’ solves problems
- 1965 - experts improve whole systems
- 2001 + - ‘everybody’ improves whole systems.

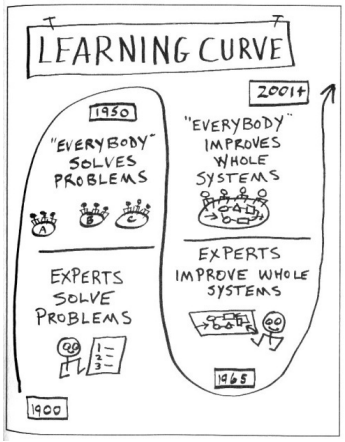


Figure 4-2: Learning curve in evolution of managing over the years (Weisbord, 2004a, p. 329)

Growing acceptance and adoption of new methods (1993 – 1997)

Through testing, experimenting and modifying by practitioners a whole family of methods for working with 'the whole system in the room', the Large Group Intervention Methods, has developed. Each method is inextricably bound up with the names of their developers, usually Americans. In 1997, Bunker & Alban wrote the first book about the LGI methods forming a family sharing the same basic principles. They inventoried 12 main LGI methods in three categories of function:

1. Creating the future together: Search Conference, Future Search, Real Time Strategic Change, ICA Strategic Planning Process
2. Work design: Conference Model®, Fast Cycle Full Participation Work Design, Real Time Work Design, Participative Design
3. Whole-System participative work: Simu-Real, Work-Out, Open Space Technology, Large Scale Interactive Events.

Worldwide acceptance of LGI methods has been growing since (Bunker & Alban, 2006). Developers spoke at conferences and wrote books on how to use their methods, such as:

- Future Search (Weisbord & Janoff, 1995)
- Search Conferences (Emery & Purser, 1996)
- Open Space Technology (Owen, 1997)
- Real Time Strategic Change (Jacobs, 1997).

Diffusion, experimentation and embedding (1997 – present)

At present, Large Group Methods are part of the practice of many Organisational Development (OD) and change consultants, and they are also used for community building and civil participation (Boonstra & Caluwé, 2007; Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2005). Spreading is

mostly done by consultants and their networks, through books, articles and marketing of their practices (Weber, 2005a; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a).

In March 2005, there was another special Large Group intervention issue of the Journal of Applied Behavioural Science. Workshops and training have been offered, there is online discussion through email serv lists, and in the USA there is a degree program at NTL Institute (former National Training Laboratories). New methods have been developed since 1997. The World Café (Brown, 2001; Brown & Isaacs, 2005) is one of the successful newcomers. It has spread worldwide by now and has its own network of practitioners.

There is a tendency for adopters to modify the methods and/or to re-label them with their own name and/or trademark for their own purpose, in order to address specific client needs or constraints (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Weber, 2005a). A number of 'hybrid' methods have evolved as practitioners have mixed designs. Some labels and hybrids I came across are:

- Knowledge Kapitiam, a synonym for World Cafés in Singapore (Tan & Brown, 2005)
- Swedish Study Circles (Brown, 2001)
- America Speaks, 21st Century Town Meeting Citizen Summit, a mix of World Café and Real Time Strategic Change (Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2005)
- Preferred Futuring, a crossover of Future Search and Real Time Strategic Change (Lippitt, 1998)
- ToP = Technology of Participation™ , a method for collaboration in community development (Holman & Devane, 1999)
- Large Group Scenario Planning, a hybrid of strategic Large Group Intervention Methods and Scenario Planning (Steil & Gibbons-Carr, 2005)
- MCR = Multi-stakeholder Collaboration Roundtable, resembles World Café (Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001)
- Appreciative Future Search, a crossover of Appreciative Inquiry and Future Search (Fuller, Griffin, & Ludema, 2000).

By the year 2007, Peggy Holman, Tom Devane and Steve Cady had collected 61 methods and derivates for interactive working with large groups (Holman, Devane, & Cady, 2007; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a).

There is a growing acknowledgement of the self-organising nature of human systems for understanding the complexities of large scale events. Conference participants increasingly want to play a key role in what happens in meetings (Eoyang & Quade, 2006). Signs of these trends are:

- Core principles and activities of LGI methods are used to enhance ordinary meetings (Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 23): rotating leadership in small groups, conferences with small round tables, stakeholder inclusion
- The term 'looking for common ground' appears frequently today, especially in situations of high divergence

- The word ‘stakeholder’ appears more and more frequently in the media and in business language, connoting involvement (Bryson, 2003; Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 25).

Not all Large Group Methods mentioned made it to widely use. This goes for the four design methods: Conference Model®, Fast Cycle Full Participation Work Design, Real Time Work Design, as well as for the simulation methods Simu-Real and Work-Out. They have possibly merged with other methods, such as Business Process Redesign and Gaming, or they are known by other names. In the second edition of the Change Handbook (Bryson, 2003; Holman, et al., 2007), some of them are still mentioned, but they are hardly mentioned in literature or on the internet as Large Group Interventions.

From the year 2000, the gap between theory and practice, and the lack of research on effectiveness as discussed in Section 2.2, have been signalled. Studies of the large group processes and methods are beginning to appear (Garcia, 2008; Granata, 2005; Oels, 2002; Polanyi, 2002). In Section 6.2, research papers on LSI will be further discussed. More attention is being paid to the importance of research and evaluation. For instance in the third edition of the *Practical Guide on managing a Future Search* (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010c) the chapter ‘Research and evaluation’ has been added, providing an overview of research and evaluative articles. However, at the time of writing, no systematic research has been done to evaluate the effects of LGIs in the longer term, nor have there been studies of large sample sizes across a wide variety of LGIs (Purser & Griffin, 2008).

The practice of LSI has spread all over the world. Books and articles on Large Group Methods have been translated in many languages. In 2009 the book Open Space Technology (Owen, 1997) was published in Russian, in 2008 the brochure Café to Go, a guide for how to host a World Café, became available in Chinese (Du, 2008).

LSI in Siberia, some Russian sounds
People do not talk much about this here in Siberia. We are the pioneers who want to involve people in the managing process, though we do have law, our government are not in a hurry and for sure are not in search for methods of involving people. WE call it (when we talk about this) as Krupnomas-shtabno-ye izmemenie - if you want Russian sounds (separated for more understandable reading and pronunciation). Source: email from Elena Marchuk, a member of the Future Search Network, May 2009.

Susanne Marie Weber (2005a, 2005b) studied the spread of LSIs in German-speaking countries. OD-consultants appear to be the agents for the diffusion of LGIs. She concludes that LGIs are successful in diffusion, but this success also carries its dangers. A short and superficial application of LGI methods can cause the loss of transformational power. Through blending of methods, they might lose their clear shape and hinder further diffusion or bring the practice into disrepute. John Tarling (2008, p. 46) sees the application of LGI methods moving away from a theory-based and process-oriented approach, tending towards an abbreviated intervention event, driven by intervention tool development.

The combination of small group meetings and large scale meetings can lead to better change proposals. However, experience showed that the enthusing impact of isolated large scale conferences hardly exceeds the duration of the meeting (Nistelrooij, 2002). Participants become enthusiastic because the suggestion they felt listened to. However, this has nothing to do with increased knowledge, understanding or learning capacity (Nistelrooij & Wilde, 2008). "LSIs could end up as nothing more than communicative play areas with little effectiveness in fostering organisational change." (Weber, 2005a, p. 119).

Necessity of severance from the roots
Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991, p. 37) speak of a *Foundational Cloud* for disciplines in cognitive science: "From a cloud the characteristics condense to a crystal, which implies severance from its roots. This is necessary to become a recognizable and accepted discipline. Leaving the roots is a necessity, at the same time it brings the risk of loss of working elements." The foundational cloud of LSI is reflected in the complex pictures of the history (Figure 4-1) and characteristics (Figure 4-3).

4.3 What constitutes LSI? Analysing the plethora of working elements

How four basic principles produce the web of LSI characteristics

In this Section, I will describe LSI as presented by the advocates of LSI. Please keep in mind that although LSI is mostly portrayed in a rather idealistic way, the arguments are informed and supported by the collective experience of thousands of practitioners, spread worldwide, and built up over more than twenty years. Discussion and critiques will follow in Section 4.11.

The diversity in the concepts underpinning LSI is shown in Figure 4-3. Each Large Group Intervention Method draws or touches on various aspects of psychology, sociology, social psychology, organisational behaviour, operational research, adult education, planning and management, human resource development and intercultural communication (Bryson & Anderson, 2000, p. 152). The level of abstraction at which the principles of participative interventions are described varies greatly, as does the terminology (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007). This also goes for the descriptions of LSI in literature.

I chose to bundle the characteristics of an LSI around four basic principles: *systems thinking*, *active participation*, *action learning* and *understanding the whole*. These principles are at a higher level of abstraction than the core characteristics of the Large Group Intervention Methods, as described by Bunker & Alban (2006, pp. 19-20), since I see an LGI as part of the bigger change process, the LSI. These four principles are rooted in a multiplicity of scientific disciplines, each with a richness of concepts and literature. To typify LSI for the purpose of evaluation research of effects I will focus on the main aspects, as considered relevant in the literature on LSI, with references to more extensive descriptions of the principles (Nistelrooij, 1999; Weisbord, 2004a; Wilde & Geverink, 2001).

The principles suggest the *working elements* of the approach. The integral combination of these working elements is required to produce an effective change process, since just one of them is not enough (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Collins, 2001). Each principle in itself is not unique to LSI, it is the integral combination that makes LSI unique. An integral combination of the basic principles, as defined in Section 4.6, is best illustrated as a non-linear diagram of interwoven characteristics. Figure 4-3 shows how the principles of LSI produce a web of characteristics, resulting in the need for the whole system in the room events. The characteristics are defined by more than one principle, but in the next Sections, I will try to unravel the relations between principles and characteristics as presented in Figure 4-3, explaining each principle separately with the most related features.

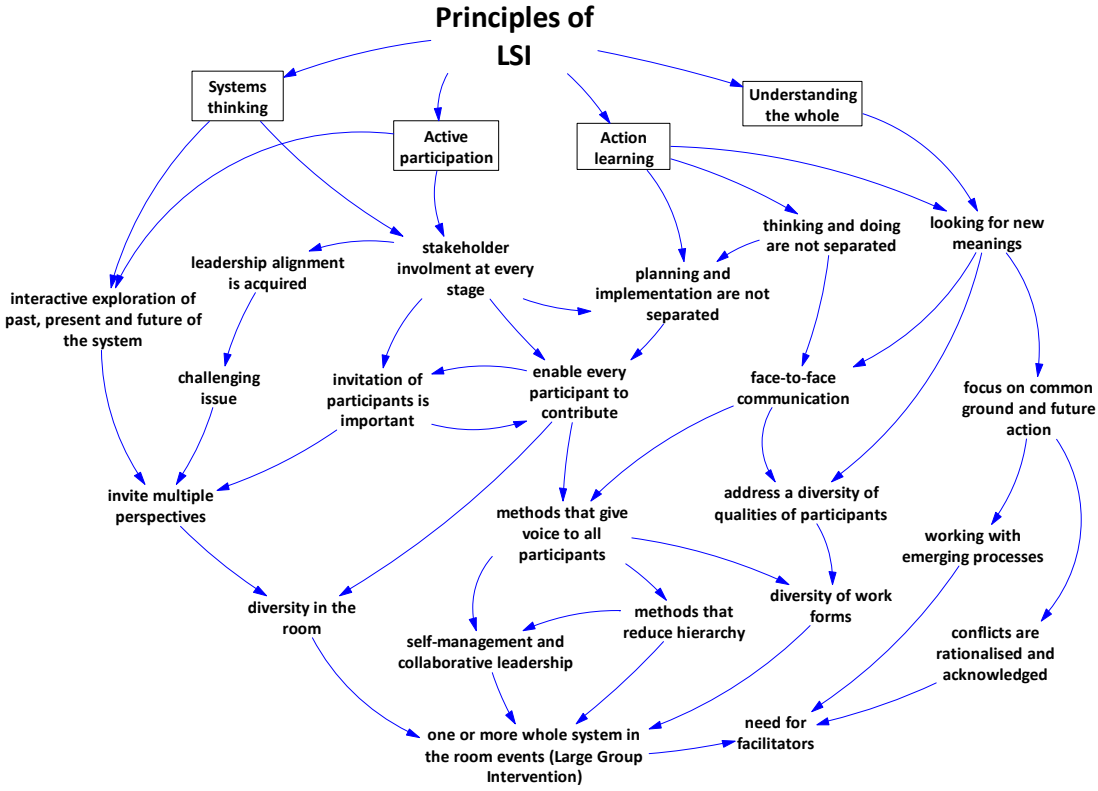


Figure 4-3: Synthesis of how the principles of LSI produce the characteristics and the need for the whole system in the room events

Systems thinking and the whole system in the room

The notion *systems thinking* covers different meanings and applications, ranging from a worldview, to a cybernetic concept, to an organisation theory (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Senge, 1990; Stacey, 2003; Vennix, 1996). I see systems thinking in LSI not being used as thinking in closed 'entities', a criticism of Stacey (2003), but as thinking in relations, in patterns of connectedness (Bateson, 2002). The boundaries of *the system* are not therefore pre-set, they have to be drawn together with those who have a stake in the issue. It also means that the boundaries are virtual, open to the flow of information in and out of the system (Pedler, et al., 2003).

Systems thinking as experienced action
"When diverse groups meet to pursue a given goal, they effectively redefine a system's boundaries. They turn 'systems thinking' into an experiential rather than a conceptual activity." (Weisbord, 2008, p. 342). In organisations, especially large established ones, people view the organisation from the perspective of their own level. Top management is often sealed off from the real workings of the organisation. Employees on the shop floor may never have seen some of the top people. In Large Group Interventions, heterogeneous groups mix people from all units and levels. (Bunker & Alban, 1992a)

The lessons of systems thinking are that apparently separate events are connected in deeper patterns, and therefore isolated actions have unforeseen consequences. Understanding such patterns comes partly by understanding how we contribute to the situation of an organisation (Senge, 1990). The assumption is that if you change something in a part of a system it will influence the whole system. Systems thinking is based on organic and living system metaphors, which emphasise the interconnectedness of parts and the necessity of system-wide learning, as opposed to personal training or team development (Pedler, et al., 2003). The more clearly we see the specific system and our part in creating it, the more clearly we also see how the specific system mirrors the deeper system (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005).

Systems thinking is based on a holistic worldview. Holistic and holism indicate that properties of a given system cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone (Bohm, 1980; Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Senge, 1990). Instead, the system as a whole determines largely how the parts behave. In the latter half of the 20th century, holism led to systems thinking and its derivatives, such as the science of chaos and complexity (Stacey, 2003).

Another aspect of systems thinking is von Bertalanffy's (Bertalanffy, 1973) concept of equifinality: the notion that there are likely to be many different paths to an equal potential destination, there is no 'one best way method or technique'. The contrast is formed by the concept of multifinality, expressing that the same starting point, using the same method, can lead to multiple paths with different destinations. Change architectures need to therefore be designed to take account of specific contexts, yet remain adaptable to both external change and the arising form of the innovations being worked on (Pedler, et al., 2003, p. 133).

The assumptions underpinning whole systems development are congruent with those of complexity science. The value of diversity, including competing value perspectives, is seen as central to suc-

cess (Pedler, et al., 2003, p. 23). Problems in a system are not seen as deviations that have to be fixed, but as aspects of a development process, to be appreciated or not.

Characteristics of LSI mainly based on systems thinking are:

- Exploration of the working of the whole system before fixing any part (Weisbord, 2004a): Past, present and future of the system are explored, along with trends from outside that might influence the system
- 'The whole system' is defined by the issue at stake (Weisbord & Janoff, 2007); Steil & Gibbons-Carr speak of the 'client system' (2005)
- Invite multiple perspectives: stakeholders are identified and invited from a diversity of stakes, and with a multiplicity of perspectives and knowledge of the system
- Focus is on patterns and possibilities instead of linear relations between causes and problems
- Design and actions are context- related
- Flexible design, there is no one best practice, and things change along the way
- Diversity in all meetings.

Principle of counter-current exchange in groups
Worley & Lawler (2006) give an example of systems thinking as used in the design of an LSI change process. The key design principle is to maximize the 'surface area' of the organisation by connecting as many employees as possible with customers and others in the external environment, to get in close touch with market and environment. This reminds me of the principle of counter-current exchange in biology; the larger the surface of contact and the higher the differences, the higher the exchange flow.

Active participation and self-management

"*People are doing change instead of having change done to them ....." (Shmulyian, et al., 2010, p. 200)*

Active participation rests on the assumption that the people who do the work must be permitted to be responsible for the control and coordination of that work. This is the Democratic Design Principle, or Principle 1 of Fred Emery (Granata, 2005, p. 40), that goes back to the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in England. The contrasting design principle, the Bureaucratic Principle or Principle 2, is premised upon control and coordination being at least one level above doing the work, thus creating competition and fragmentation. Thinking participatory tends to bring things together, while thinking literally tends to fragment (Bohm, 1980). Decisions that have been taken after a joint problem analyses and solution generation are binding (B. Gray, 1989).

Literal thinking
The evocative experience is increasingly rare in modern society. This is because a different type of thought, 'literal thought', has been taken up by the modern mind as our primary way of relating to each other and to our experience of the world. Literal thought tries to describe reality as if it really existed (Brown, 2001).

LSI uses the self-organising power of the participants, making them responsible for action. Participation and self-organisation imply that it is not completely clear in advance what the results will be. Consequently, leaders and consultants will have to live with some uncertainty about process and outcome, which requires flexibility and a facilitative attitude. However, the final decisions are usually made by the formal leaders, making it important to be clear about the roles of stakeholders in decision-making.

Active participation implies that people feel invited to contribute and that their contributions are taken seriously. The only way to know what it takes for stakeholders to feel invited and what their perspectives are is to involve them in the planning process. Designing the LSI process with a broad representation of stakeholders is essential (Bunker & Alban, 1997; Dannemiller-Tyson-Associates, 2000a; Jacobs, 1997; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995). For this reason a planning team and/or design team is established at an early stage in the change process.

LSI invites collective working and learning. Ideas and conclusions emerge from collective actions. Participants self-manage the process as much as possible, taking responsibility for their own actions. This means that leaders and consultants have a different role, compared to top-down approaches. Facilitation of an LSI is a 'hands-off' approach, which enables people to take responsibility for themselves (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). The role of the facilitators and formal leaders is to create and contain a holding environment to work in a collaborative task system (Owen, 1997; Schruijer, 2001).

Trust is viewed as fundamental to any collaborative process (B. Gray, 1989; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Schruijer, 2006; Schruijer & Vansina, 2004). Hence, the process is characterised by recognising and accepting interdependence, helping people to cope with uncertainty, reducing complexity by increasing the response predictability of action and replacing external controls by internal ones.

Leadership is distributed in collaborative processes
Harrison Owen says (2008, p. 103): "Leadership manifests itself at the junction of passion and responsibility in every person." Sandra Schruijer and Leopold Vansina (2004) make a distinction between the role of a collaborative leader and the function it serves. They state we do not necessarily need a role as such, or a role to be fulfilled by one person only. They describe the essence of leadership in multiparty collaboration as creating and maintaining conditions for getting the most out of diversity of perspectives, competences, and resources that parties bring to the table, while simultaneously enabling the different parties to realize their objectives.

Characteristics of LSI mainly based on active participation are:

- Stakeholder involvement at every stage of the change process
- Planning and implementation not separated in time or by the roles of stakeholders
- Work with a design team of stakeholders
- Leadership alignment acquired
- The issue challenges for the whole system
- The process of invitation of participants is important in order to involve the right people
- Enable every participant to contribute
- Methods that give voice to all participants
- Self-management as much as possible
- A setting where participants feel free to contribute.

Responsibility for action leads to keeping thinking and doing together, both in the role of actors and over time. This implies not making plans for others, but for your own actions. Wherever possible, plans are made and acted upon in real time during the large group conference. Some examples of real time change are testing and deciding on new work processes with all who are involved, or building a collective vision and agreeing on the action required to realise that vision.

Philosophy of facilitation
Facilitating an LSI requires a hands-off approach that enables people to take responsibility for themselves (Weisbord & Janoff, 2007). The assumption is that all participants are doing the best they can with what they have, given the circumstances, and what they are ready, willing and able to do. Therefore:
- Participants need no special knowledge or prior training to succeed
- Facilitators and managers accept people as they are and do not try to change them
- Facilitators and managers seek to alter conditions (a structural approach) rather than behaviour (a behavioural approach).

Action learning in diversity and multiplicity

Whereas active participation focuses on *who* is involved in what stages of the process, action-learning focuses on *how* people are involved. However, the concepts have some overlap. Action learning is defined as learning by doing and is based on the assumption that those who experience a problem must be central to researching, acting and learning to resolve it (Pedler, et al., 2003, referring to Revans 1982). Dannemiller-Tyson-Associates (2000a) call this 'building of a common database of the whole system in action research'.

The need for action learning is also based on the concept of requisite variety of Ross Ashby that states that the more variety there is in perspectives on an issue, the more we can understand what is going on, and the more possibilities we can see to bring change (S. J. Beer, 1995; Morgan, 1986; Wierdsma, 1999). Learning to ask discriminating questions is at the heart of action learning. Juanita Brown (2001) speaks of 'strategic questioning'.

The work in the whole system meeting, the Large Group Intervention (LGI), is largely done in small sub-groups (2 – 10 persons). Small group dynamics bring focus on tasks (Granata, 2005; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995). In their book *Future Search*, Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff compare the change process with walking through a '4-room apartment'. This concept was developed by the Swedish social psychologist Claes Janssen (Weisbord & Janoff, 1995). Each room of the apartment offers a new experience and feeling: the contentment, denial, confusion and renewal room. In a large group meeting, but also in the overall LSI, all rooms may be visited several times (see Figure 4-4).

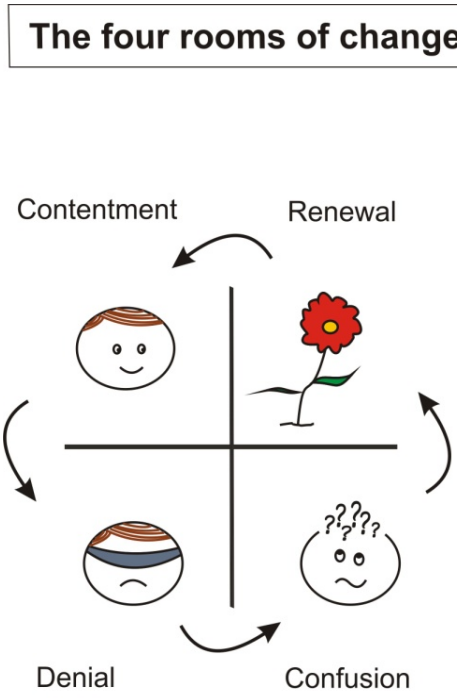


Figure 4-4: The four rooms of change (Weisbord & Janoff, 1995)

In his book *Wave Rider*, Harrison Owen (2008) presents a similar model. He calls it 'Grief' with the stages 'Anger, denial, despair, open space and renewal'. Grief about ending and death is essential for renewal, we have to let go and open space for new possibilities (Owen, 1997, 2008).

Characteristics of LSI mainly based on action learning are:

- Thinking and doing are not separated
- Planning and implementation are not separated, real time change as much as possible
- Face-to-face communication in a whole system in the room event, shared experience
- Data-gathering and analysis is done by stakeholders
- Methods that reduce hierarchy
- Methods that give voice to all participants

- Self-management and collaborative leadership
- Working with emerging processes
- Dealing with uncertainty and anxiety is required
- Create a setting where participants feel free to contribute.

Understanding the whole, looking for common ground

The LSI-approach is aimed at sustainable change, rooted in the development of collective learning and building capacity for change. An assumption is that sustainable experience is created by engaging the whole person (mind, body, spirit), because reality is defined by meanings as well as facts. The underlying worldview is that everything that lives wants to grow, to flourish, and that development of capacities is possible under the right circumstances (Geus, 1997; Weick, 1995). Collective learning is developed through action learning, and by working together with the goal of looking for new meaning and growth. Karl Weick (1995) describes looking for new meaning as 'sensemaking', a process with seven properties. I summarise this process as follows: "If people start to act (enactment), they generate tangible results (cues), in a context (social), and this helps them to discover (retrospectively) what is going on (ongoing), what has to be explained (plausibility), and what has to be done (identity enhancement)". The key lies not in getting more and better information, but in turning information into information that cannot be ignored (Collins, 2001; Weick, 1995).

Sensemaking with the whole system in the room
Weber (2000) typifies sensemaking as the need for people to be part of a group, and the need to work together on a larger goal that makes sense to them, something they can believe in. Bunker & Alban (1992a, p. 585): "Working together in highly interactive groups that cross-cut role and status creates an opportunity to get to know each other and find common concerns and values. It can be a very humanising experience that travels with participants back to the workplace and translates into an easy capacity to cross boundaries that once were daunting."

Meeting and working face-to-face plays an important role in sensemaking (Waal, 2005; Weick, 1995): "If people want to share meaning, then they need to talk about their shared experience in close proximity to its occurrence and hammer out a common way to encode it and talk about it. They need to see their joint saying about the experience to learn what they jointly think happened".

Conflict is not seen as a problem that has to be solved, but as a source of diversity for renewal. Anxiety signifies readiness to learn. Anxiety is the place we store energy while deciding whether to invest it. (Weisbord 2004a). To address as many learning styles of participants as possible, a diversity of work forms is used. Although some methods emphasise dialogue, visualising of patterns and results plays an important role in LSIs. It has been suggested that visual reasoning is more universal than verbal reasoning (White, 2002), and that it enables children and unlettered groups to contribute as well.

Collective meetings, working on common ground
Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (2008, p. 19; 2010a) explain: "Fred Emery, a pioneer in his field, held that when two people work on a common task outside themselves they are more likely to improve their relationship than if they confront one another's habits, styles, and quirks directly in the absence of any other task." Karl Weick (1993) states that it is not in the first place about shared vision, but about shared experience. This stresses the need for collective meetings.

Characteristics of LSI that are mainly based on the principle of understanding the whole, of looking for common ground are:

- Looking for new meanings
- Face-to-face communication
- Addressing a diversity of qualities of participants
- Use of a diversity of work forms to meet all learning styles
- Working with emerging processes
- Focus on common ground and future action
- Rationalising and acknowledging of conflicts
- Need for facilitators.

4.4 What makes LSI different from top-down approaches?

What does an LSI process look like? What are the key distinctions between change with LSI and 'Non-LSI' approaches? Several authors (Bunker & Alban, 1997; Holman & Devane, 1999; Jacobs, 1997; Königswieser & Keil, 2000; Leith, 2004; Wilde & Geverink, 2001) provide descriptions and overviews of differences between LSI and what they call traditional or conventional approaches, where 'traditional or common or conventional' is implied as 'top-down, non-participative'. Table 4-2 gives an overview of key distinctions, as perceived and promoted by LSI developers and consultants, between Large Scale Interventions and traditional top-down change approaches. For this table I used the aspects as formulated by Jacobs (1997), and modified by Martin Leith (2004), to order the distinctions. Note: The 'Top-down' approach may come out as a caricature for some readers.

Table 4-2: Key distinctions between LSI and top-down approaches for change.
Adapted from Robert W. Jacobs in "Real Time Strategic Change" (1997) and Martin Leith in "Leith's guide to LG methods" (2004)

Principles and aspects	Large Scale Interventions	Top-down approach
View	Change is viewed as an integral component of people's work.	Change is viewed as a disruption to people doing their 'real work'.
Stakeholder involvement	Broad-based involvement of stakeholders, providing a varied perspective and comprehensive awareness of current reality.	Stakeholder involvement is limited, awareness of current reality is limited.
Focus	Focus on seeing and realising future possibilities.	Focus on identifying and solving problems.
Vision shaping	Through involvement of the whole system.	Shaped by an elite group of experts and senior management.
Database of information	A large group's broad, whole image of reality forms the basis for information and strategic decisions. There is extensive stakeholder involvement.	A small group's views of reality form the basis of information and strategic decisions. Stakeholder involvement is limited. External stakeholders groups like suppliers, customers and the local community are often ignored .
Leadership and ownership	People are responsible for the organisation's effort as a whole. The need for change is self-determined and the process is self-managed.	People are responsible for only their part.
Communication of change strategy	Through conversations, two-way communication.	Through messages, one-way communication.
Flexibility	Systems thinking produces a cyclic process of designing steps and reviewing goals. Awareness of current reality is comprehensive.	Linear thinking produces a programme with a pre-determined sequence of steps leading the organisation towards a fixed goal. Rarely are there any opportunities for the goal to be reviewed and if necessary re-defined.
Way of thinking	Systems thinking leads to insights into the complex web of cause and effect. An issue is viewed in a broader context, including trends.	Linear thinking, often an issue is not viewed in a broad enough context and delayed reactions are not taken into account.
How change occurs	Simultaneous planning and implementation, initiated throughout the whole organisation at the same time.	Planning and implementation are sequential. It requires the world to stand still while the planners do their work.

Working with the whole system in the room, the Large Group Intervention (LGI) is at the heart of an LSI. Characteristics of Large Group Interventions compared to conventional top-down conferences are given in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3: Characteristics of LGI compared to conventional, top-down conferences. Based on Wilde & Geverink (2001)

Aspects	Large Group Intervention	Conventional top-down conference
Preparation	Preparation by a cross-section of the system, preferably including parties from outside the organisation.	Preparation by a group of managers in consultation with the facilitator/advisor, or by the facilitator/advisor.
Way of dealing with differences	Everyone's truth is true. Learning from each other's vision and perspective through dialogue. Differences are seen as enriching.	Discussion and debate are the main modes. There are right and wrong viewpoints. Differences are seen as a problem.
How change occurs	Change in the here and now.	Participants talk about change.
Involvement of stakeholders	Everybody involved in the problem or issue is invited. There is a lot of knowledge and wisdom on the shop floor.	Co-workers of the shop floor are often not invited. Managers deal with strategic questions.
Focus	The (emotional) meaning of the issue is as important as its contents. Focus is on jointly giving meaning to a knowledge system with regard to its past, present and future and searching for a path to that future.	Focus is on the content of the issue, on problem solving and on drawing up plans that are to be implemented later by others.
Management	A facilitator facilitates the conference and manages the conditions for efficient, effective and creative group work.	The conference is led by a powerful chair, who can - consciously or unconsciously - control and dominate the process.
How participants are energised	Learning from each other, developing a common knowledge system, is fruitful in itself and has an energising effect. Games and other interventions are used only to support the primary learning process.	Incentives, games and various kinds of trimmings are often used in order to ensure that the participants enjoy the conference, but distract from the primary learning process.
Function of the conference	The conference is an integral part of a whole process, which is clear to everyone and based on various principles.	The conference is an isolated event. The main objective is 'to have a good discussion' and to produce a list of intentions.

4.5 Positioning LSI as an approach for change in organising

Although LSI has firm roots in Organisation Development (OD), I place LSI in a broader scene. The whole system approach of LSI differs from OD in two important ways. Firstly, LSI is a task-directed approach (Pedler, et al., 2003; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995). The central task or issue determines who

the stakeholders are and what the system is. This might concern an existing organisation, a community, or a cluster of organisations, but it can also be a combination of departments within organisations, or a network of professionals, shifting the focus from established organisations to work systems (Hoebeke, 2000). Secondly, it would fit the whole system change process better to speak of Systems Development instead of OD, with a focus on organising within fluid systems instead of static institutes, and to see change a verb instead of a noun (Bohm, 1980; Chia, 1996; Weick, 1995).

From organisation to organising
Pedler et al. point out (2003, pp. 143-144) that 'Whole Systems Development' (WSD) fits an era when organisational boundaries are loosening and becoming more complex and problematic. In giving voice to the many different interests and motivations making up an organisational field of activity, WSD builds on the earlier Organisation Development (OD) and learning organisation approaches. However, although many WSD methods would be recognised by OD practitioners, these earlier approaches tended to focus on helping single organisations respond to the challenges of change. Now the apparently solid noun organisation seems less appropriate to describe what is happening than the more fluid verb of organ*ising*."

The principle of equifinality in Bertalanffy's open systems theory means that there are different paths to the same place. This implies that there is no one best way when organising and changing (Boonstra, 2004a; Buelens & Devos, 2004; Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003; Kerber & Buono, 2005; Pedler, et al., 2003; Stacey, 2003; Wierdsma, 1999). Besides organisational characteristics, circumstances, purposes and the perceived outcomes, the fit of the change strategy to characteristics of the organisation, conditions and goals are considered an important factor in determining the effectiveness of the change process. It is therefore important to position LSI as a specific strategy for change in the broad field of change strategies. Werkman, Kloot & Boonstra (2005) distinguish five strategies for change. The research of Werkman (2006) reveals a correlation between the change strategy and the development of change capacity in organisations. Table 4-4 gives a summary of the five change strategies and their impact on the development of change capacity of an organisation, based on the work of Werkman et al. (Werkman, 2006; Werkman, Boonstra, et al., 2005; Werkman, Kloot, et al., 2005).

Table 4-4: Change strategies and development of change capacity, based on Werkman (2006)

Strategy for change:	Power	Systematic	Negotiation	Programmatic	Interactive
Approach:	Push: controlled, top-down	Move: fixed planning	Negotiate agreement about wishes and interests	Pull: stepwise, adaptive	Discover the desired future
Participation:	None	Little	Political process	Employees contribute to change process	Interactive development of change process
Development of change capacity:	Very low	Low	Little	Limited	High

In Table 4-4 the degrees of participation vary from zero in an extreme power strategy, to doing everything together on an equal basis in an extremely interactive strategy. In this table, the interactive approach is defined by high levels of participation. As this table shows, the higher the level of participation, the more change capacity can be developed. This conclusion will be further discussed in Chapter 5, as an element in the framework for evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI.

A similar classification of change strategies has been made by Bryan Smith in the *Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (Senge, et al., 1994, p. 314). He describes five modes for creating a shared vision, based on the level of engagement of stakeholders: tell, sell, test, consult and co-create, also ranging from zero to complete participation of stakeholders. Jack Martin Leith applies this model as modes for change in a broader sense in *Leith's guide to Large Group Interventions Methods* (2004). He relates the change modes to typical issues and circumstances for which Large Group Intervention Methods are assumed appropriate (see Figure 4-5).

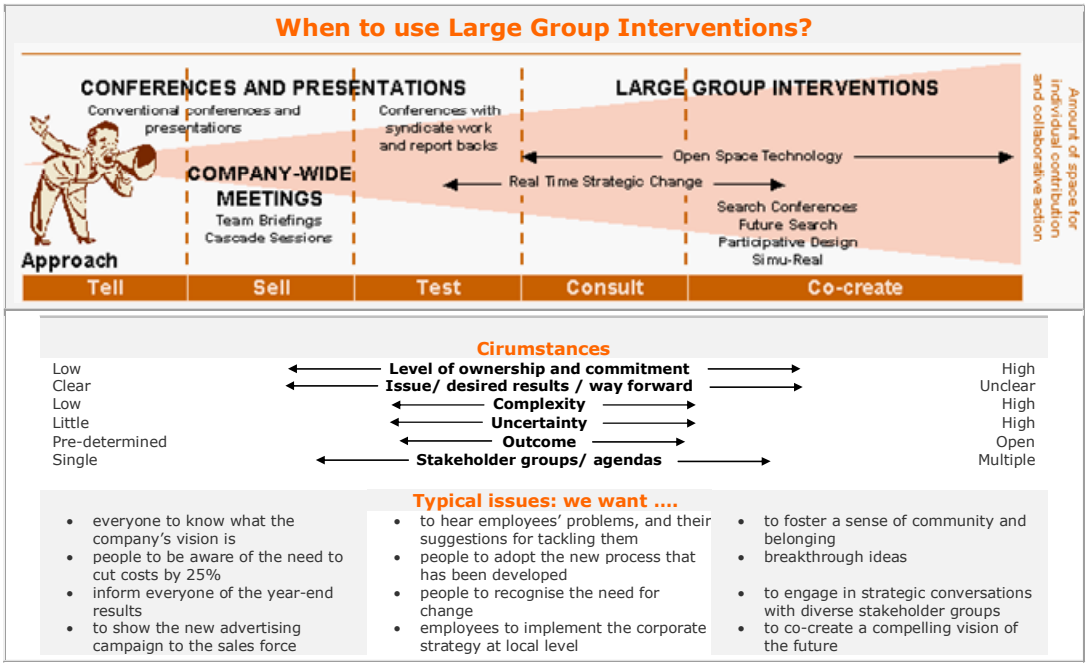


Figure 4-5: Position of Large Group Interventions in the field of approaches for change (Model by Jack Martin Leith and Paul Miller, 2004, based on a model by Bryan Smith in Senge et al., 1994)

Figure 4-5 shows the circumstances that are assumed to justify the involvement of stakeholders. Key determinants for the right circumstances for applying LGIs are the levels of:

- Required ownership and commitment
- Clarity of the issue
- Complexity of the situation
- Uncertainty of the situation
- Openness of the desired outcome
- Multiplicity of stakeholders or agendas involved.

The higher the level of one or more key determinants, the more space for individual contribution and collaborative action of stakeholders is required, and the more appropriate the circumstances are for LGIs. In the top part of Figure 4-5 some Large Group Methods are compared with other types of meetings. In the bottom part, the choice of a change approach is illustrated with typical issues matching the diverse change approaches. The five categories of Leith (2004) show great similarity to the classification of Werkman as shown in Table 4-4. An approach with LGI suites the approaches consult and co-create of Leith (2004) and LGI suites the categories programmatic and

interactive change strategies of Werkman (2006), the categories expected to bring out sustainable change, meaning building of change capacity.

From the presented range of change approaches, it follows logically that LSI is not the right approach for all circumstances. The level of participation of stakeholders in the change process should match the conditions and task. It also implies that the change approach LSI is not synonymous with a 'bottom-up' approach. Actually, an LSI process often contains a combination of top-down and bottom-up steps. Pedler et al. (2003, p. 50) speak of a 'middle-ground framework'.

4.6 Summary of the basic assumptions and principles

The basic assumption underlying 'Whole system interactive change' is that in order to change systemic issues, the change process must involve the whole system. Focus on individuals or groups as 'the problem' will not be effective when the problem is system created (Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 4). This raises questions such as "What constitutes the system, where should the boundaries be?", "Who should be involved and in what way?", and "How can working with the whole system in the room be productively organised?". In an ongoing search for answers to these questions, the Large Group Interventions methods developed, and are still developing.

Although every Large Group Method has its own features, the family shares a set of principles which distinguishes them from other change approaches. Several authors have described these principles on different aggregation levels (Bunker & Alban, 1997; Nistelrooij & Wilde, 2008; Purser & Griffin, 2008; Wilde & Geverink, 2001). For the bigger change process LSI, I have been looking for the basic assumptions and principles underlying the characteristics. As Section 4.5 showed, the LGI methods stem from a web of disciplines and concepts, making it difficult to decide what is most basic. For practical reasons I selected four principles I consider basic, followed by their main assumptions:

1. Systems thinking: Dynamics over time influence the future of the system (organisation/community and its stakeholders); change in a part of the system will influence the whole system;

2. Participation of stakeholders: Active participation and self-management enhance commitment to change, and to learning and working together; for systemic change affected stakeholders need to be included;

3. Action learning in diversity and multiplicity: Engagement of multiple perspectives through interactive processes facilitates shared understanding; not separating thinking and doing in time or roles of participants facilitates real time change;

4. Understanding the whole, looking for common ground: When participants find common ground, by sharing views and experiences, it is possible to move forward from that common ground; conflicts are rationalised, not resolved; focus is on future possibilities, not on past problems.

As stated in the last row of Table 4-3, the LGI is an integral part of a whole process. I have defined this bigger process as the LSI trajectory. Section 4.10 will focus on the architecture of LSI.

4.7 The LSI family: Large Group Interventions methods

Several authors have made comparisons of types of LSIs (Bryson & Anderson, 2000; Bunker & Alban, 2006; Crombie, 1985; Granata, 2005; Holman & Devane, 1999; Leith, 2004; Wilde & Geverink, 2001). They mention the following main criteria for specifying an LSI:

- The LGI method(s) used
- One large group conference or a sequence of conferences
- Short and simple preparation or extensive, lengthy preparation
- Degree of representation of stakeholders
- Procedure for selection of stakeholders
- Follow-up structure provided or not
- Primary goal of the application: planning, structuring or learning methods
- The type of system.

The LSI family is usually ordered according to the chosen LGI method(s). In 1997, Bunker & Alban distinguished twelve main LGI methods. Meanwhile the family has grown substantially. Various authors mention twenty or more types of LGI methods (Bryson, 2003; Bunker & Alban, 2006; Holman & Devane, 1999; Homan, 2005; Pedler, et al., 2003; Weber, 2005a). By 2009, Weisbord and Janoff count over 60 LGI methods (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a).

The features of the LGI methods show a wide variety, from very structured with a fixed format (Future Search, Conference Model®, Search Conference) to a very open structure with a fixed format (Open Space Technology), to very structured but with a custom-made format (Real Time Strategic Change), and everything in between (World Café, Participative Design, Simu Real). Nevertheless, they all show the characteristics of the LSI family.

Depending on the circumstances, the client and the facilitator, or the design team, select one or more LGI methods to enable working with the whole system in the room. Criteria for the selection of a specific LGI method also form the criteria for ordering the LSI family (Bunker & Alban, 1997; Wilde & Geverink, 2001). The main criteria are:

- Objective of the intervention
- Nature of the main issue
- Power structure: to what degree is participation of stakeholders possible and desirable
- Number of participants to be involved
- Available preparation time
- Overall time required for the process

- Need for input of advisors and experts.

Inspired by a mind map on the website of VISTA consultant group (Vista, 2005) I made an image of the LSI family tree, with the major LGI methods (see Figure 4-6). The ICA Technology of participation and the Fast Cycle Full participation (Bunker & Alban, 1997) are not represented, since they are not widely used. In this family tree, the three main branches are formed by the task categories of Bunker & Alban (1997):

1. Creating the future: collective vision and strategy making
2. Work design
3. Discussion and decision-making about current issues, questions, or problems.

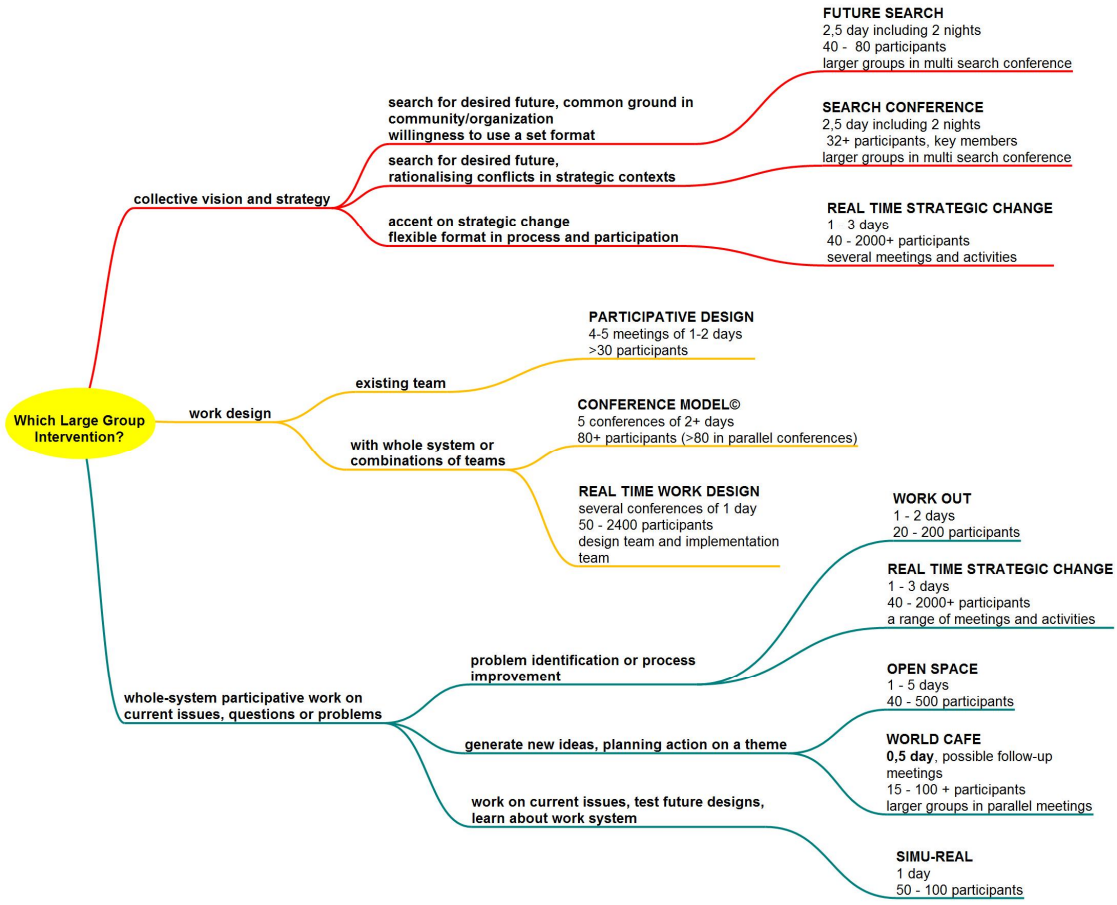


Figure 4-6: Overview of the LSI family, adapted from a brochure by VISTA Consulting www.vista.uk.com

How to select an LGI method
In 2005 I developed a tool for my LSI training courses *How to select an LGI method*, as part of an online introduction to working with Large Scale Interventions (Zouwen & Strobosch, 2005a) with charts for the methods mentioned in Figure 4-6. Appendix 1 is based on the charts Future Search, Real Time Strategic Change, Open Space, and World Café.

4.8 What LSI is not: Related approaches and methods

LSI is not the only whole system approach. Pedler et al. (2003) describe other approaches with the whole system and meetings with large groups, such as political or religious meetings. In addition, the term Large Scale Interventions is used for work in developing countries, in health care and for military operations. These types of interventions may show some similarities with my definition of LSI, but they differ from LSI in two essential aspects. Firstly by the lack of systemic two-way face-to-face communication of participants, and secondly they are not held for the purpose of organisational change or learning. For similar reasons, large group meetings such as pop concerts, festivals, soccer matches, pilgrimages and protest demonstrations, are not LSI.

Whole Systems Design
The term Whole Systems Design is used both for environmental sustainability solutions of landscapes and building constructions, as well as for organisational change in work systems (Google Search on internet "Whole Systems Design", 20 April 2010).

Examples of participative intervention methods for organisational change that are related to LSI but do not meet all the criteria of the LSI definition, are the following:

- Gaming/Simulation (Duke & Geurts, 2004; Geurts, et al., 2000; Geurts, Duke, & Vermeulen, 2007): possible with large groups, but not necessarily the whole system in the room, highly pre-structured and less self-management of stakeholders
- Group Model Building (Rouwette, 2003; Vennix, 1996): no large groups, no self-management
- Learning Histories (Mirvis, Ayas, & Roth, 2003; Roth & Kleiner, 1998; Smid, 2007): no exploration of present and future, not necessarily the whole system in the room
- Narrative approaches (Abma, 2000; P. Shaw, 2002): can be seen as small-scale change, incremental change through conversations
- Soft System Methodology (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Symon & Cassell, 1998): Systems thinking, but not the whole system in the room
- Team Syntegrity (S. J. Beer, 1994): not the whole system in the room
- Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001): possible with large groups (the AI summit), but not necessarily the whole system in the room, and is not holistic because the focus is on positive experiences.

The term Large Scale Organisational Change (LSOC) is used as a synonym for LSI by Manning & Binzagr (1996) and Schmidt Weber & Manning (1998). However, LSOC refers to the outcome of a planned change process that significantly alters the performance of an organisation (Manning & Binzagr, 1996; Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998; Waclawski, 2002). An LSOC does not have to be participative or include stakeholders. It follows that an LSI is an LSOC, but not all LSOCs are LSIs.

4.9 Research focus on organisations and commonly used LSI types

Type of system

For this research journey on the effectiveness of LSI, it has not been possible to scrutinize every type of LSI, so a relevant selection has to be made. My criteria for selection are:

- Focus on change in work systems, not in local communities or regions
- The purpose is transformational change of an organisation, building of capacity to change, and not design or testing of procedures
- Widely-used Large Group Methods, spread all over the world, and with growing importance
- Have a reputation of effectiveness for transformational change.

LGI methods

Although most LGI methods are practised all over the world, some of them can be seen as the 'best known'. They have a track record on several or all continents, and they have been used in public, non-profit, and business settings, both intra-organisationally and in inter-organisational or community settings (Bryson & Anderson, 2000). They have their own worldwide network of practitioners, training programme and learning communities. At the time of writing these methods were:

- Future Search, network on the internet www.futuresearch.net
- Open Space Technology, network on the internet www.openspaceworld.org
- The World Café, network on the internet www.theworldcafe.com.

For an inquiry into the effectiveness of LSI, it seems appropriate to concentrate on these methods for the Large Group Intervention. Their diffusion can be seen as a promising indication of the effectiveness. Yet, what to do with the 'hybrids', the LSIs with a mixture of features from different LGI methods? In my practice, they play an important role, because often a design is 'tailor-made', and as signalled above, there is a trend for increasing modification and mixing methods. There is one LGI method with a very flexible format, the Real Time Strategic Change (RTSC) (Jacobs, 1997), also called Whole-Scale Change™ (Dannemiller-Tyson-Associates, 2000a, 2000b). The description of the RTSC process shows high resemblance with my definition of an LSI. I have taken the liberty of using the RTSC umbrella for all the hybrids that meet the definition of an LSI, although they are not a 'pure' RTSC as prescribed by Jacobs (1997), Dannemiller-Tyson (2000a) or Nistelrooij & Wilde

(2008). The features of Future Search, Open Space Technology, World Café and RTSC are compared in Appendix 1.

4.10 Architecture of an LSI trajectory

Carnall (2004, p. 112) defines the architecture of a change process as: the set of arrangements, systems, resources and processes through which we engage people in productive reasoning focused upon creating a new future. How does one recognise the architecture of an LSI process? The event with the whole system in the room plays a central role in the architecture. Tom Gilmore and Deborah Bing (Gilmore & Bing, 2006) distinguish three phases in the LSI process:

1. Pre-Event: engage key stakeholders in the substantive issues and the 'work' of the conference
2. The Event: engage a microcosm of the system in the thinking, challenging, and doing of real work
3. Effective Follow-Through: mobilize the larger system to push forward on planning and ideas.

As in the meetings with the whole system in the room, the whole LSI trajectory consists of a mix of work in the large group, in small groups and individual work. The ideal LSI is part of a larger change architecture. Pedler et al. (2003, p. 134) give a model for this bigger change architecture, (see Figure 4-7).

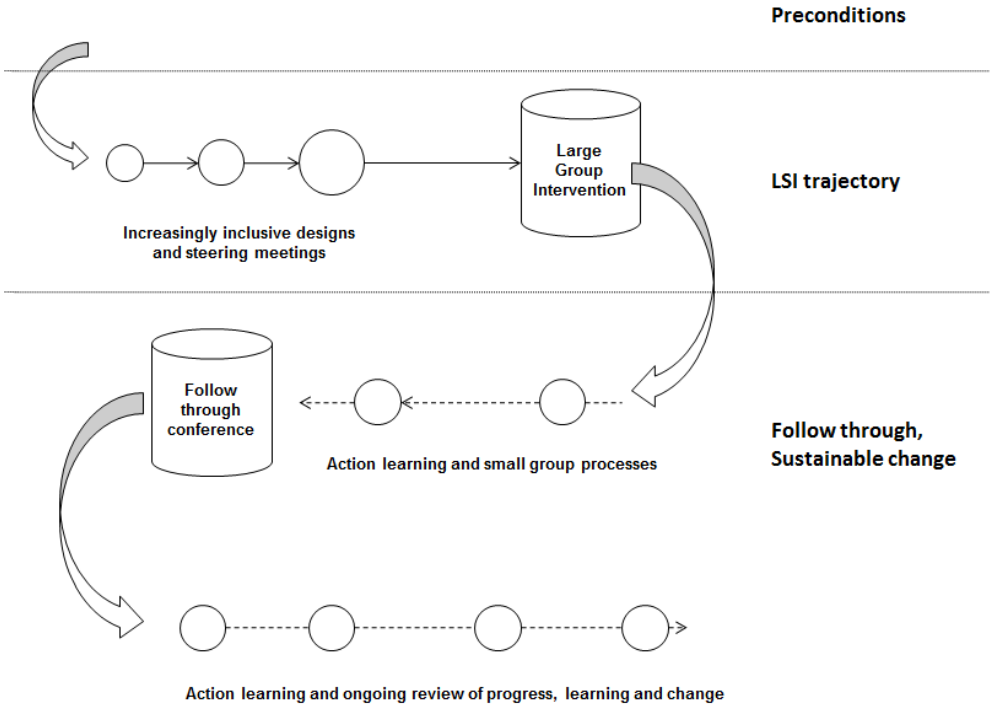


Figure 4-7: Architecture of a change process with LSI (adapted from Pedler, et al., 2003, p. 134)

In practice, it is often hard to say when the process starts or ends, because LSI works with flexible designs and emerging processes. For practical reasons, I have drawn the end boundary of the LSI trajectory after the Large Group intervention. I define the steps following the LGI, the 'follow through' in Figure 4-7, as effects. Arguments for this split are found in the claim of the LGI being a catalyst for the change process, inducting sustainable change. Moreover, often the contract with the consultants/facilitators ends after the LGI. I take the time span of the contract between the client and the consultants/facilitators as a measure for the beginning and end of the LSI trajectory.

When does an LSI start?
In practice, things are more diffuse. An experienced Future Search facilitator says: "No, it does not start with a proposal for a sponsor, it starts when somebody says: We have to get our arms around this. Then someone says the magic words: I know a process that will help you. That is when it starts: Let's talk about Future Search. How much does it cost? What do we need? Then call someone, or the Future Search Network. The Future Search Network will say: 'we will figure it out together'." (Marsha Pendergrass, interview during the Learning Exchange of the FSN in South Africa, November 2007).

Although Large Group Methods are often used to 'kick-start' a process or as a stand-alone conference event (Bunker & Alban, 1992a, p. 586), this study focuses on LSIs intended to bring about

transformational, sustainable change. They have the explicit goal of changing the way of working. Each LGI method has its own prescriptions for embedding in a bigger process. In most LSIs the methods used for 'working with the whole system in the room' define the architecture of the change process (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Weber, 2005b). Sometimes more than one LGI method is used in succession, or methods are blended to meet special requirements of the situation.

Combining interactive methods
Some examples of combining interactive methods are:
- Future Search and Open Space (Lent, McCormick, & Skubis Pearce, 2005)
- Large Group Methods and Scenario Planning (Steil & Gibbons-Carr, 2005)
- Appreciative Inquiry and Open Space (Voetmann & Gómez, 2004).

Figure 4-8 gives an example of an LSI architecture. The LSI is based on a Real Time Strategic Change format for the large group meetings. In this example, management alignment with the formal leaders, planning and preparation takes three months. In the first Large Group meeting, strategic planning is done during three days with a representation of the whole system. In the following three months, action plans are worked out and implemented by project groups of stakeholders. A two-day whole system meeting is held to review the actual situation, to celebrate results collectively, and to install a Controlling Team. The Controlling Team monitors the progress of the change process, in cooperation with the formal Management Team.

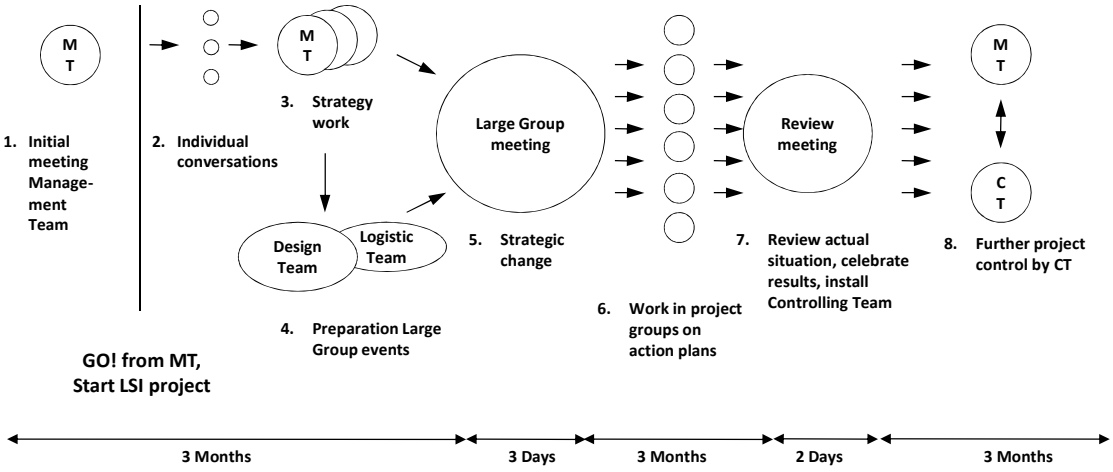


Figure 4-8: Example of an LSI architecture with a Real Time Strategic Change method for the LGI

Rhythm in playing with group size
Most work in an LGI is done in small groups. This is no coincidence. In nature, the relation between surface area and weight is non-linear, as is the relation between group size and exposed 'surface'. Complexity rises exponentially with group size, while the surface exposed to the outside world decreases proportionally. There is something like an optimal group size and a critical group size. In an LGI we play with group size by working alternately in the large group, in small groups and individually, a rhythm of splitting and merging. What rhythm is desired is a major design question (reflection March 2010, while reading Bateson (2002, p. 50).

4.11 Return on expectations

Framing the field of LSIs

In this chapter, the phenomenon LSI has been described and framed for this research journey. LSI appears to be a fairly complex approach for change, determined by the multiplicity of disciplines it is rooted in, and the diversity of methods used for working with the whole system in the room. To be able to answer the research questions as formulated in Section 3.1, I have made a selection of LSIs, by focusing on organisational change, and on the potential of methods to establish sustainable effects.

The research question "What is LSI?" has been answered. To summarise, an LSI trajectory for this study can be recognised by:

- A planned and phased approach for organisational change with deliberate and connected actions (interventions), spread over a limited period of time
- A work system defined around a strategic issue for change
- Stakeholders of this system are involved at every stage of the process, representing the diversity of the system
- One or more events with (a significant representation of) the whole system in the room, the Large Group Intervention (LGI)
- The LGI method used is Future Search, Open Space Technology, World Café, or RTSC, where RTSC also represents all hybrids of the former
- A contract with one or more consultants to facilitate the process.

In the following sections the claim for sustainable change, setting up high expectations of LSI, will be discussed.

Measuring Return on Expectations
In May 2010, I participated in the World Open Space on Open Space (the WOS on OS), in Berlin. Over 170 practitioners of Open Space Technology met to share and learn from experiences, and to develop new initiatives. One of the sessions I attended was about measuring the 'Return on Expectations', a session hosted by Thomas Hermann from Sweden. We discussed how the system could be invited to compare results with leadership expectations of what already has been planned. I adopted the title, because I supposed there to be a strong relation between perceived success of an intervention and expectations set up during the process.

Claimed effect: Sustainable systemic change

Almost all books and articles on LSI that I have read claim to effect systemic and sustainable change. The sub-title of the book by Bunker & Alban (2006) is illustrative: "*Creating Systemic Change in Organizations and Communities*". What is meant by sustainable change in LSI literature?

Dannemiller-Tyson (2000, p.145) see sustainable change as a paradigm shift. The organisation anchors the required changes in the fibre of the organisation while maintaining its ability to respond to the next challenges.

Sustainable change as paradigm shift
An illustration of their claim of sustainability is given in the snapshot of their website: "Whole Scale™ Change consists of a series of small and/or large group interactions that enable the organisation to undergo a paradigm shift. It applies an action learning approach, using Whole Scale™ events as accelerators. Using microcosms, groups that represent the entire range of levels, functions, geography and ideas in the organisation. Whole Scale™ processes provide a powerful way of working with the whole system to create and sustain change. Whole Scale™ also enables a 'critical' mass of the organisation to create a new culture in the moment. The same critical mass then models what the organisation could look like and becomes the vehicle by which powerful change occurs in the whole system."(snapshot of the website www.wholescalechange.com, Aug 5 2008)

More views and claims for sustainable change are:

- Learning Organisations: LGI acts as a catalyst in the transition from bureaucratic to learning organisations, i.e. to improve an organisation's capacity to pursue its purpose under changed conditions, with new means and new structures if necessary (Bunker & Alban, 1997)
- Enhanced democracy: The World Café can build learning bridges between those in power and the other voices in our society so that something new can emerge (Tan & Brown, 2005). Lukensmeyer & Brigham conclude about Large Scale Interventions for citizens in America (2005, p. 59): "The use of Large Group Methods in the public sector has had a significant impact on a range of local, regional, and national policies. We believe these methods hold great promise for the future by helping to create new processes, like national conversations at a very large scale that will play an important role in revitalising the way democracy is practised."
- Double-loop learning: Pedler et al. (2003, p. 126) see double-loop learning (Argyris, 1990, 1991), in which people consciously reflect on and question their assumptions or theories-in use, as a core process of whole systems developments. It strengthens the collective capability to 'learn how to learn' (the definition of double-loop learning) within the complex networks of contemporary society

- Transformed and empowered system: Merrelyn Emery (reffered to by Granata, 2005) sees a transformed system. The community or organisation has empowered itself and moved into functioning according to a new 'design principle' with a more democratic structure.

Chapter 5 will come back to this difficult concept of sustainable change. To conclude the discussion of LSI, I will first review the critical voices.

Critiques

Most LSI successes are reported by consultants who have facilitated the process. However, for two reasons external consultants are probably not the best source of information on the effectiveness of interventions in an actual case. First, they are usually not long enough on location to observe the effect, and second, they have an interest in positive results (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007, p. 327).

Most of the literature on LSI is meant to promote the approach or a specific LGI method (Purser & Griffin, 2008). Since reflection on risks is often not considered good marketing, only a few authors express critiques of LSI by speaking of possible risks, mentioning failures, or by challenging underlying assumptions. However, I see a tendency for increasing reflection. In the book by Bunker & Alban (2006) all authors end their article with a reflection section. In 2010, Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (2010a) wrote a critical reflection on the ins and outs of Future Search, including the conclusions of research on Future Search. After the year 2000, more research was done on the effects of LSI, resulting in critical notes. Sustainable change seems to be possible, but not guaranteed. The conditions have to be right, and the effects have to be sustained. The major problem in sustaining the effects of LSI seems to be that the conditions that allowed new patterns to emerge dissolve after the LSI. Bunker & Alban state (2006, p. 315): "Little attention is given to the conditions that produced the outcomes. These meetings give people a very different experience but one that is not accompanied by sufficient reflection on and conceptualization of what made the experience unique-different from what happens in the workplace."

A fire as metaphor for Large Group Interventions
I felt relieved when I found the book *Das Feuer Großen Gruppen* (Königswieser & Keil, 2000). After all the idealistic books and articles, finally a more realistic and critical note. Large Group Interventions are compared with a fire: it can warm and inspire you, but you can also get burned if you do not take care. Boos & Königswieser state in their chapter *Unterwegs auf einem schmalen Grat: Großgruppen in Veränderungsprozessen* (2000, p. 18): "In unserer Arbeit sind Großgruppen immer in Veränderungsprozesse eingebettet, weshalb wir es auch grundsätzlich mit allen für solche Prozesse signifikanten Begleitphänomenen zu tun haben. Das bedeutet, daß man mit großer Verunsicherung, mit Aggression, Kränkung, Widerstand, Trauer und Regressionstendenzen rechnen muss. In dieser hohen Aufladung mit Gefühlen liegen die Gefahren, aber gleichzeitig auch die Chancen von Großgruppen."

What weaknesses are mentioned by critics? First of all, LSI has to be worth the effort. Susanne Maria Weber says about LSI (2005a, p. 111): "They are hence to be analysed with regard both to the risks of their success story and the promising myth of a fundamentally transforming experi-

ence". Chris Huxham and Siv Vangen even go as far as (in Schruijer, 2006, p. 238): "Collaboration is hard work and hardly happens without conflicts, frustration and fatigue. We recommend against collaboration unless there is no other option left."

Another critique is that facilitators play an important role in success. Annemarie Groot (Groot, 2002, p. 190) ends her thesis *Demystifying facilitation of multi-actor learning processes* with the conclusion: "Facilitators are critical variables in the success of participatory interventions addressing complex issues, involving multiple interrelated factors and actors…….. The challenge of facilitating is not to reach for the latest handbook on participatory techniques, but to clean up their own act by critically reflecting on their own assumptions, values, interests and practices in order to avoid reinforcing the very practices that in theory they were meant to change." I think this challenge goes for LSI as well.

Furthermore, leaders have to be ready for it. Pedler et al. stress (2003, pp. 32-33): "Public learning depends on leaders, and others, having the confidence, courage and skill to think aloud, confront issues and support challenging views. This is very demanding, especially for those whose previous experience of leadership has been about decision-making behind closed doors*."*

In addition, there is the risk of benefit to the status quo. Michael Polanyi (2002, p. 364) concludes in his research on the short-term effects of Future Search: "By assuming that every group has legitimate and compatible interests (and needs to be in the room), Future Search encourages the adoption of an incremental and voluntary model of social change that tends to benefit those whose interests are compatible with the status quo*."* He states that Habermas proposes that ideal or non-coercive speech requires that the 'force of the better arguments prevails'. Polanyi concludes (Polanyi, 2002, p. 365)*: "*However, argument is avoided in Future Search. So there is no opportunity or basis for exploring the validity, legitimacy or sincerity of competing claims*."* (referring to Oels, 2002)*.*

Then again, what effects are 'worth the effort'? Marie-France Turcotte and Jean Pasquero (2001) conducted a study that examines the outcomes of a large scale event called Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Roundtable (MCR), with environmental protection as central theme. They conclude (2001, p. 447): "The findings shed a considerably more realistic light on the concrete outcomes of MCRs than does the image portrayed by the literature and some practitioners. We observed that consensus was achieved, albeit on general principles only. Various types of learning did occur, but they were limited to networking competencies. Problem solving was detected, albeit in the form of incremental innovation only. Overall, the major result of the MCR studied was that it contributed 'small wins' to its initial objective. The case illustrates the paradox of MCRs. It teaches us that we should be cautious about their real potential to help solve complex collective problems. Yet, it shows that MCRs do serve a useful purpose, that of giving direction to 'meta-problems', a result that apparently can hardly be attained otherwise." Although MCRs are not meant for organisational change, they are rooted in the same principles and adopt similar work forms as the LSIs this study focuses on. To what extent does the signalled paradox apply to LSI trajectories? Even con-

ferences that do not lead to further action can be worth the effort, although it is hard to distinguish failure from closing off blind allies (Crombie, 1985).

Closing off a blind alley
Alistair Crombie points out (1985, p. 27) : "Some Search Conferences do lead nowhere in terms of further action. Sometimes this represents a positive achievement, in closing off a blind alley. Sometimes however, it will be because the task was ill defined, or the wrong cast was assembled, or the event was poorly managed. At its best, the process should be celebratory, but it should also lead to action."

Expectations raised have to be fulfilled, or there is high risk of negative effects. Glenda Eoyang and Kristine Quade (2006) explain this from a system dynamics point of view: the container where differences and exchanges function as an attractor for new patterns has to be continued somehow. I will go deeper into this perspective in Section 14.7. Michael Polanyi concludes (2002, p. 466): "In sum, I argue that this particular large group process (Future Search) makes important contributions, but that we need to apply the method in a more reflexive way to address some potential limitations and dangers that exist."

Practitioners that are more reflective also report possible risks of LSI. A summary of risks I have found in LSI literature:

- Power play in meetings (Oels, 2002; Schruijer, 2001)
- Influence of personality (extrovert/introvert); some people are afraid to contribute in a large group (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007; Polanyi, 2002)
- Being in a large group leads to decreased risk-taking, decreased ability to have a useful discussion and fear of standing out (Schruijer, 2001, 2006; Schruijer & Vansina, 2004)
- People fight, flee or freeze in the face of differences instead of keeping dialogue alive (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a)
- Under organising: each party strives for its own goals (Schruijer & Vansina, 2004)
- Collusive climate brings mediocrity: conflict avoidance, conformity (Eijbergen, Baaij, & Hagen, 2007; Leith, 2008; Schruijer & Vansina, 2004)
- Groupthink caused by conflict between groups can lead to a call for strong leaders, resulting in autocratic leadership rather than collaborative leadership; groups suppress their internal differences (Schruijer, 2006)
- Group stereotyping (Schruijer, 2006)
- Complexity is too high to manage for participants: looking for strong leaders promotes obedience and dependency (Schruijer & Vansina, 2004)
- The assumption of common ground legitimizes interests and aims of more powerful groups (Polanyi, 2002)
- Common ground projects are a list of 'the easiest things to do' (Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001)
- Sponsor and or facilitator manipulate the process of stakeholder selections to meet their (unconscious) needs/goals (Schruijer, 2001)

- 'Talk-fests': Too much talking, not enough changing, it does not lead to action while it should (Crombie, 1985)
- Favours educated and articulate people (Crombie, 1985; Polanyi, 2002).

In Part 3 "A practical guide to LSI", the risks and contra-indications of LSI will be explored systematically.

Back to evidence based practice

In this chapter, LSI is portrayed from the view of advocates as well as critics. Looking back on the history of LSI, I see an interesting development in the relation between theory, empirical research, and practice. LSI originated from a web of thoroughly tested theories. In the early days, between 1950 and 1990, the founders of Large Group Methods, were usually highly committed to development of theory and to empirical research. Most of them were university-based (Bunker & Alban, 1992b). They present the new interventions with caution, and they do not avoid mentioning less successful experiments (D. Axelrod, 1992; Emery, 1992). In fact, one could say LSI took off as evidence based practice.

A word of caution from the early days
In 1992, the first special edition on Large Group Interventions appeared in the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science appeared. The articles have a descriptive and reflective tone (D. Axelrod, 1992; Bailey & Dupré, 1992; Bunker & Alban, 1992a, 1992b; Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992; Emery, 1992; Gilmore & Barnett, 1992). The authors emphasise the key factors that must be present for this technology to work. In the concluding article of the special issue, the editors reflect critically on effectiveness of Large Group Interventions (Bunker & Alban, 1992a). Dick Axelrod states in his contribution to the special issue (1992, p. 508) "A word of caution: The time saved as a result of involving more people in the process is a result of the investment of time spent in the planning and preparation of the intervention, the walkthroughs, and in the conferences themselves. It is through this expenditure of time that involvement and commitment are created. Shortcuts in any of these processes will reduce commitment and increase resistance by the organisation, thereby increasing the total time spent on the intervention."

In the following decades, the Large Group Methods crystallise from their foundational cloud of theoretical concepts. Consultants 'run off' with them, modifying and mixing techniques, and mystifying the process for commercial reasons. The tone in most literature on LSI becomes mainly prescriptive, with focus on how to apply a specific Large Group Method, illustrated with examples of successful cases. Where mystifying of LSI has helped to sell the message and spread the methods, I think it is time for a more realistic view, demystifying the process again by critical reflection, and return to evidence based practice, through systematic synthesis of the effectiveness. This stance is confirmed by the words of Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff about Future Search (2010a): "Those who want the techniques without the philosophy and personal commitment are likely to disappoint themselves. Future Search best serves those who believe good planning requires vision,

attractive goals, collaboration, commitment, hard work, sufficient time, involvement of all parties, and continual re-visiting.”

It seems clear that LSI is not always as successful as the image portrayed in literature and by most practitioners. So far, it is my opinion that LSI has potential for sustainable change, under the right conditions and facilitation. This study aims for insight into when and how an LSI trajectory is effective in bringing about sustainable change, as claimed by advocates. But what does sustainable change look like and how can it be evaluated? In the next chapter I will build a framework for levels of effectiveness, to guide systematic evaluation of sustainable change in practice. The journey goes back to the theoretical concepts LSI is rooted in (see Section 4.2), and then forth again, looking for other theoretical concepts as building blocks for this framework.

5 What is sustainable change? Building a theoretical framework for effectiveness

Do not get trapped in too philosophical an account, knowing that a more earthy conceptualisation is of more help (Cherns, 1987)

As stated in Chapter 4, there are plenty of reports of LSI having the potential to bring about sustainable change. But what then is sustainable change in organisations? And what is non-sustainable change? Whether a change process is considered effective and sustainable, depends largely on what is defined as sustainable change, and how the degree of effectiveness is measured. For research on the effectiveness of LSI, a conceptual framework is needed. This framework will have to give insight into the nature of change. It will have to provide a basic logic, a model, to distinguish non-sustainable from sustainable change in evaluations of LSI. In this Chapter I will build a model based on two theories. As foundation for this model, I will use the knowledge theory 'The Logic of Feeling' by the philosopher Arnold Cornelis (Cornelis, 1993). The second theory for the framework is the 'Complex social responsive theory' by Ralph Stacey (Stacey, 2003; Stacey & Griffin, 2005), about dealing with complexity and transformational causality. My model will prove to be of great value when we, in Chapter 6, 7, and 8, try to assess whether and how LSI can contribute to its claim of bringing about 'real sustainable change'.

The framework builds on my pragmatic stance as discussed in Section 3.2 and 3.3. From this stance, theory is viewed as a social process, so the framework will not be a model *of* practice but a model *for* practice. The world is seen as an undivided whole, out of which I carve concepts for the purpose of making a model for different levels of effectiveness, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of LSI interventions, for reasons of improving the practice of LSI. In describing the concepts that form the building blocks of the framework, I will use the principle 'intelligent simplification', meaning that I will try to enlighten the model as profound as necessary to be functional (Vermaak, 2009a). Readers with a background in philosophy may find my choice and discussion of concepts rather eclectic. I realise it will not be possible in this chapter to position every concept in the philosophical traditions.

This chapter has been structured as follows. First, I will describe the concept of 'The Logic of Feeling' as basis for the model. Since this is a rich and elaborate philosophy, but unfortunately not widely- known outside the Dutch language region, I will introduce its terminology and explain the basic assumptions. Second, I will discuss how the 'Complex Social Responsive Theory' supports my view on organisations as patterns of relations and communication. Then, I will construct the central model for assessment of the effectiveness of interventions, as an interdisciplinary and evolutionary model for development of collective capacities in dealing with organisational change. I call my model the 'Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication'. Next, I will operationalise this model by defining learning blockades in development of organisations. These learning blockades will be

illustrated with examples from practice. This chapter ends with a summary of what sustainable change means for evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI.

5.1 The knowledge theory of the Logic of Feeling as fundamental concept

Why this concept?

Before going into details about the concept of the Logic of Feeling, I want to describe how I made the choice and why I think this concept qualifies as the foundation for a framework for sustainable change.

I am of the opinion that there are indeed fundamental truths about people. These are the values everyone agrees on (exceptions aside). The main value is that everybody, as each living system, wants to develop their capacities, wants to grow, stay alive and live a meaningful life, whatever that may be. This can be used to measure good and evil or to bring them into the realm of discussion.

I studied a wide variety of intervention concepts and management models, comparing their basic assumptions and characteristics. Combined with my experiences in intervention practices I came to the realisation that I need a framework that includes biological aspects, besides structural and process aspects of organisations. As a biologist, I am of the opinion that a large part of our behaviour is determined by our natural inclination. As human beings, we are *bodily* creatures sharing our evolutionary heritage as social mammals with all the needs for our individual body and as a group. (Maturana & Varela, 1992; Waal, 2005). There is growing evidence that we observe and act upon far more signals than we are conscious of (Hall, 1984; Stacey & Griffin, 2005; Varela, 1997; Waal, 2005), still most change models leave out biological and unconscious aspects.

From a spatial metaphor to a temporal metaphor for transformation
From my background as biologist, it surprised me how little attention is paid to the biological aspects of collaboration, while a substantial part or our relations and decisions are formed unconsciously, driven by biological motives. Although every salesperson knows that more than 80% of our decisions are taken for non-rational reasons, in most management models and models for organisational change emotions and feeling still play no role. Moreover, change models are often presented as matrices or schemas where time does not play a role. At what time then should success be reached? The time aspect is excluded. Arnold Cornelis gives an explanation for this phenomenon in his book *De vertraagde tijd* (Cornelis, 2000), the title means something like 'temporized time'. He states that we cannot 'see' time, because we think in spatial metaphors. The spatial boundaries caused by splitting up in disciplines and paradigms originate from modernistic thinking in specialisations. In order to take time into account, we have to move from a spatial metaphor of inside and outside to a temporal metaphor of continual reproduction and potential transformation (Cornelis, 2000; Stacey & Griffin, 2005).

As I was reading *The Logic of Feeling* "*De logica van het gevoel*"(Cornelis, 1993)[1] examples were continuously crossing my mind, causing recognition and clarification. The Logic of Feeling provides me with steppingstones for other logics. It appealed to me for the following reasons:

- It is so fundamental and integral that the theory can be illustrated in and to all disciplines and also has consequences for all disciplines; it offers an overall theory of learning
- It continues to build on the logic of philosophy in history, does not reject other logics, but merely integrates them by placing them in a particular layer of stability in human culture
- It gives an important role to time
- It involves the person as a whole, as an organism, as a social being, and as a communicative being
- It offers a counterweight to purely rational lines of reasoning which do not assign any role to feeling
- Cornelis makes the analogy of bodily development and evolutionary development with the learning development from child to adult and the development of humanity from a primitive society to a communicative society
- I find the manner in which Cornelis links his theory of knowledge to art quite elegant
- It gives a role to emancipation of people, of men and women.

Basics of the Logic of Feeling: thinking in three steering systems

The Logic of Feeling is a knowledge theory, a philosophy meant to explain how learning in living systems takes place, how capacities are developed in social systems. The main work of Arnold Cornelis *The Logic of Feeling* (Cornelis, 1993) is a report of more than twenty years of research at the Gent University, Groningen University, and the University of Amsterdam. Arnold Cornelis was a professor in philosophy and social theory in the Netherlands and in Belgium. He was a student of Jean Piaget, and was inspired by Piaget's theory of cognitive development and the knowledge theory of Gregory Bateson (Cornelis, 1993).

The essence of the Logic of Feeling is learning to think of reality in more than one knowledge system. Cornelis (1993, p. 58) defines reality as layered, because of three steering systems operating at the same time: the steering system of the material world, the steering system of the social reality of human actions, and the steering system of meaning and values. When looking at a problem, it is important to know in what steering system the problem takes place. Looking for a solution in the wrong system leads to catastrophic learning processes (Cornelis, 1993, p. 3) because you are looking for a solution in a system where the solution cannot be found.

[1] The book is first published in 1988, in Dutch language. To present day it has not been translated in English.

Roots of the Logic of Feeling
Arnold Cornelis based his theory on the thinking of Jean Piaget and Gregory Bateson (Cornelis, 1993) This shows for example in:
- Focus on qualitative development of knowledge
- Chronological sequence is inevitable in development of capacities; you first learn to crawl and then how to walk, and not the other way around
- Knowledge is not simply acquired from outside the individual, but is constructed from within, mostly subconsciously tested
- A dual process of internal and external steering.

This way of thinking can be applied to any level of human relations, to any social system, from an individual, a family, an organisation, a society, or the whole of humanity. For organisations, the living systems in focus for this research, it implies that learning develops over time from internal steering (our will, what we need as persons) to external steering (what rules do we agree upon to coordinate work) to communicative self-steering (how does work practice fit what we want to be, our values). In the next Sections, the key notions of the Logic of Feeling will be explained with Figure 5-1 as a guideline. Please keep in mind that this is just a part of the theory of Cornelis, a summary of his book by more than 750 pages. My intention is to provide a model for reality, which according to Gergen (2005, p. 232) gives ‘sense and some significance to the world, a viable mode of going on’.

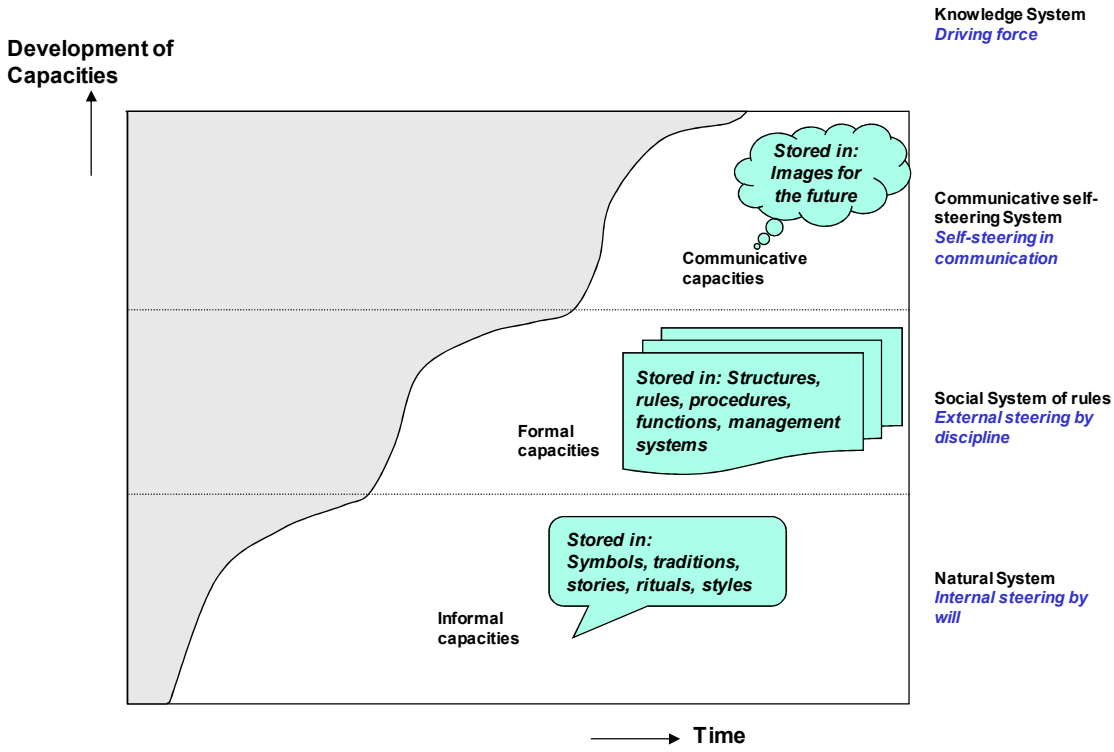


Figure 5-1: The Logic of Feeling, illustrated for an organisation as accumulative development of capacities over time

Figure 5-1 shows the development and accumulation of capacities in an organisation over time. Development of capacities means learning how to become what you want to be. The basic assumption is that every living system wants to grow, wants to mature and to bear fruit. The ideal line of development starts with the 'birth' of the system and ends with a certain state of maturity and fruitfulness, which can be seen as steering possibilities according to what is meaningful in the context of the system. The time scale is defined by the living system/organisation in focus.

The three layers of reality are shown in Figure 5-1 as the Natural System with internal steering by will, the Social System of rules with external steering by discipline, and the Communicative self-steering System, with self-steering in communication as driving force. Applied to organisations, the Natural System consists of the informal capacities. The Social System of rules comprises the formal capacities of the organisation. The Communicative self-steering System is formed by the communicative capacities within the organisation. This model is an evolutionary model, a model for capacity building. It explains 'accumulation' and 'stabilization' of capacities in organisations. In the next Sections, each of the three systems of the Logic of Feeling is described in more detail.

The Natural System, internal steering in bodily creatures

*Things are normal. A tree cannot walk, a car cannot dance, and light does not travel with 10 km per hour (*Willem Kayzer in *De Waarnemer)*

The manner in which people order their world, what is found to be logical, how they develop their identities, is steered by their own drive towards development and the capacities attained in the process. Cornelis calls this the Natural System. The Natural System is the domain of observations and of the material world. Main issues in this system are: What do I observe? Do I feel safe? You learn who you are in your extended family or organisation in the Natural System. The memory, and thus the capacities, of the Natural System is unconscious to a significant degree, but expresses itself in symbols, myths, stories, and rituals.

The Social System of rules, external steering

For efficient cooperation in the organisation, some control is needed over the Natural System's drive for growth. For this reason, people in the organisation develop agreements to 'get affairs in order'. These formal arrangements make up the 'Social System of rules'. The memory in the Social System is stored in rules, procedures, organisational structures, job descriptions, management systems, etcetera. For efficient allocation of people and resources, discipline is needed to fulfil agreements made, and to adjust them where necessary. Observations in the Natural System get significance, get a place, in the Social System of rules. This creates the possibility for professional actions (Cornelis, 1993, p. 136). The degree of discipline determines coordinated collaboration, and also whether it is permissible to make mistakes and learn from them. Too much discipline inhibits learning and stifles creativity, which produces feelings of oppression. Too little discipline results in chaos and anger because things are poorly organised.

According to Cornelis, a rule presupposes that the rule is valid, everywhere and every time. That is why a control system cannot adjust to changes in the environment. There is no possibility to honour the specific character of the situation, because that would imply breaking the rule. In the long run, a saturation of the Social System sets in (Cornelis, 1993, p. 17).

The Communicative self-steering System

The development of the Social System reaches its limits at a certain point. Changes in the environment can require new activities, which cannot be conceived of at that time by the organisation because they are experienced as illogical because they do not fit into the existing internal models of reality. The more the environment changes, the greater the need for new actions becomes. This requires the repertoire to be expanded. However, to enable this, we must revise the rules, norms, and social structures from the Social System, tested against the personal development and values of the Natural System. This test can only be conducted in communication with others, through reflection on, and evaluation of, rules and underlying assumptions. Only then new models of reality can arise. It is this communicative test of the Social System against the personal relational elements in the Natural System that I assume the value of LSI to lie. In Section 14.1, this assumption

will be further discussed. When the transition is made to testing the drive for development from the Natural System and the drive for justice from the Social System, then a new layer arises, the System of Communicative self-steering. Here, the memory consists of images for the future, for the intentions of a person or organisation.

Driving forces of the three knowledge systems

The Logic of Feeling is a cybernetic model, showing dynamics of development of capacities in an organisation, caused by the driving forces in the three knowledge systems. In the discipline System Dynamics, relations between variables are usually presented in two modes (Bryan, Goodman, & Schaveling, 2006; Senge, 1990; Vennix, 1996): a representation of development over time, such as in Figure 5-1, and a representation of driving forces in the system in a so-called Causal Loop Diagram (CLD). Figure 5-2 represents the dynamics of the three knowledge systems as CLD.

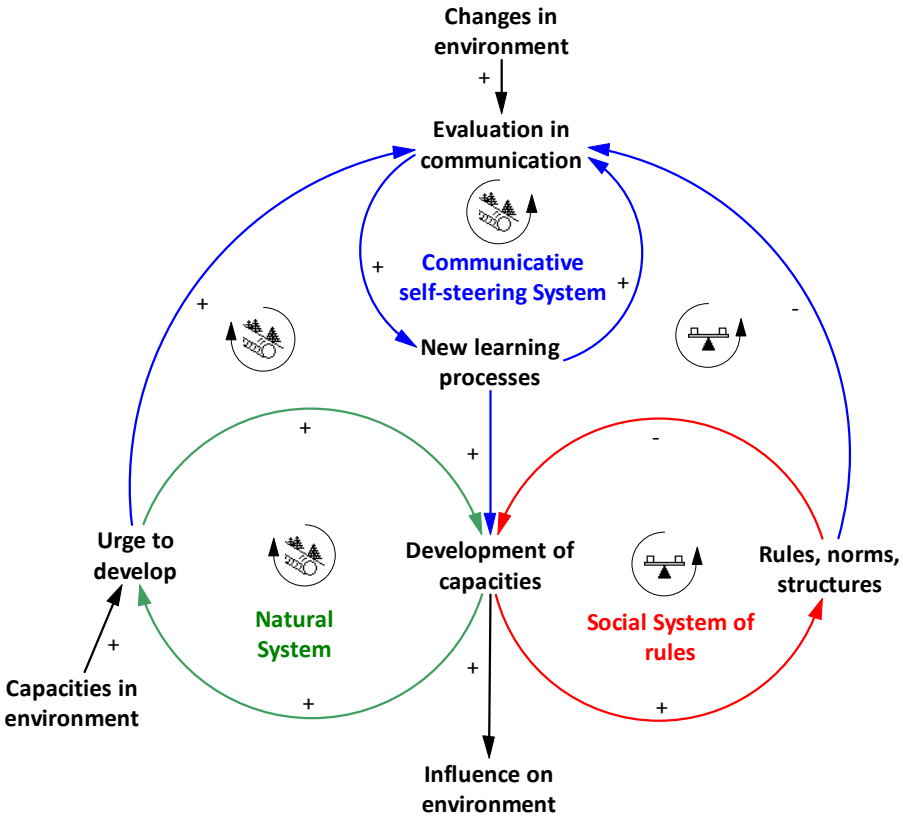


Figure 5-2: A dynamic representation of the driving forces of the three knowledge systems of The Logic of Feeling

What does Figure 5-2 show? The central variable is the 'Development of capacities'. Factors in the Natural System, the Social System of rules, and the Communicative self-steering System that influence the development of capacities are connected with arrows. Some factors have a reinforcing influence, indicated with '+', while other factors have a balancing impact, indicated with '-' beside the arrow. Please note that the positive and negative signs have nothing to do with good or bad.

The development of available capacities is paramount. This is from the viewpoint that a person's essential purpose is to develop personal capacity, and guide his/her own learning process in communication with others. The development of capacities is a learning process that is stimulated by the natural urge to develop in the Natural System, forming the reinforcing loop, also called the constructive or positive loop. A reinforcing loop is marked with the snowball symbol. The higher the urge to develop, the more capacities are built, the higher the urge to develop, etcetera. At the same time, the development of capacities is also affected by the rules and norms of the Social System of rules. The Social System of rules forms the negative or balancing causal loop. A balancing loop is marked with the scale symbol. The more rules and norms, the less capacities are built, the higher the influence of rules and norms will be, etcetera.

Applied to organisations, development is initially determined by the available capacities of people and resources. The love for the field also belongs to the Natural System. In order to work together on shared goals, structures (such as building setup, function, rules, norms, procedures) arise along with the Social System of the organisation. In both systems, we have assumptions, visions, and models of reality. The totality of models of reality comprises the logic of the organisation. My hypothesis is: the greater an organisation's capacity to develop itself, the greater the potential influence on the environment as a result of reinforced capability to learn and perform actions.

Models of reality have limitations by their very nature. After all, they determine what belongs and what does not. Furthermore, a conflict can arise between the logic of persons and of the organisation. To enable further development, a new system is needed, that can integrate the Natural System and Social System. This system arises when new visions and models emerge in communication with the environment. In the Communicative System of the organisation, rules, norms, procedures, and structures are tested against the values of individuals and the objectives of the organisation.

Thus, the development of capacities has two steering modes from two systems, which can be integrated by a third system. Every organisation can develop three layers, being three knowledge systems: Natural System, Social System, and System of Communicative self-steering.

A crucial point in this model is that no one layer is more important than the other. For complete and thorough development, you cannot miss any of the three layers. One system builds on another. Specialization for instance added a lot to our knowledge in the Social System of rules, but in the Social System of rules the backbone of the organisation, the Natural System, is not discussed or examined. By investing in communication, the organisation can reach the ability to attune the different systems and discover new possibilities. The System of Communicative self-steering develops knowledge of knowledge. Arnold Cornelis calls this second-order collective learning. Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (Maturana & Varela, 1992 p. 248) call it knowledge of how we want to use knowledge.

My conclusion is that the capacity to deal with change can be developed in more than one knowledge system. I have called the drive towards development the *Will* to learn, to experiment. *Discipline* determines how to enable coordinated collaboration, and to learn from mistakes. Excessive discipline, however, inhibits learning and stifles creativity. *Communication* about the models

of reality makes new learning processes possible. As the Communicative System is further developed, not only does one 'learn' more (development of capacities), but learning capability (determining what and how you want to learn) increases as well. It is this learning how to deal with change that makes change sustainable, as will be further discussed in Section 5.3.

The knowledge value of feeling

Why did Cornelis call his knowledge theory The Logic of *Feeling*? Feeling steers our learning. The three systems form stability layers, where the primary human emotions (the strong feelings) fear, anger and grief, can nestle, can be taken away or reduced. Each layer of the Logic of Feeling has its own criteria for right and wrong: right or false observation in the Natural System, right or wrong method or procedure in the Social System of rules, matching our goal or not in the Communicative System. Our feeling indicates whether the criteria are met or not. The emotions fear, anger and grief, indicate in what system a problem or issue is playing.

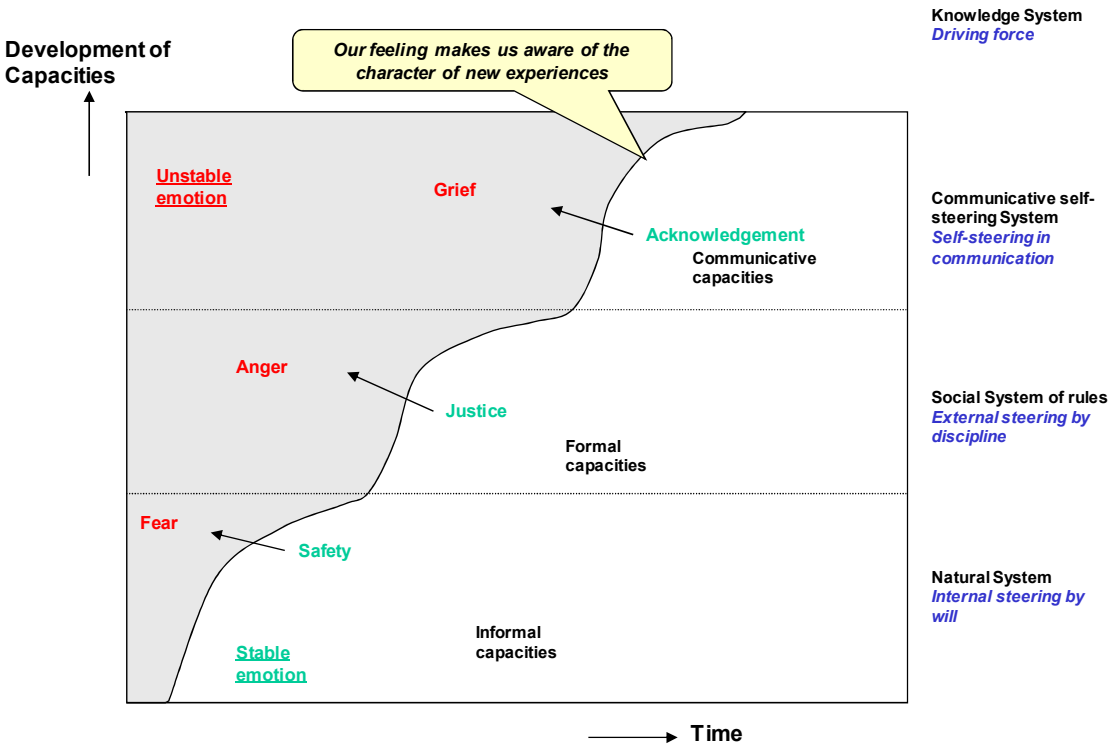


Figure 5-3: The role of feeling in the development of capacities over time.

Figure 5-3 illustrates the role of feeling in the development of capacities. In the Natural System, you feel at home, safe, if the situation is right. If not, you experience fear. Some organisations are known for their culture of fear. People do not feel safe, there is not enough trust because of pow-

er play or dictatorial leadership, or the physical conditions are not safe. For the Social System of rules, you feel fairly treated, if the situation is right. If not so, you are angry. In the system of communicative self-steering, you feel acknowledged if the situation is right, or grief emerges.

Catharsis and maturation

A child absorbs as much as it can take in, given its phase of development. Very much alike, the learning process for change in organisations goes only as far as the current logic is ready for (Cornelis, 1993, p. 561). In several workshops I conducted on the concept of the Logic of Feeling, the critique was expressed that it is a deterministic model, discriminating against people or organisations who did not reach the stage of communicative self-steering as inferior to those who have. However, this is not about value but about maturity. I do not think a child is less important than an adult is. We cannot say that a young developing system is worth less than an older or more mature one; at the most, that it has not developed to its full potential (yet). Nevertheless, there is a notion here of 'you have to be ready for it'; you cannot skip a stage. The basic assumption is that when you grow up you can lead a more meaningful life if you see more possibility of dealing with changes. Seeing no possibilities for the future leads to depression, burn out or even self-destruction.

Critique on purposefulness
Personal log, 5 March 2010: A reflection while reading an article of John Gray (2009, pp. 85-86) on Oakeshott's critique of purposefulness. I want to emphasise that even though the Logic of Feeling is a model for development, it has no fixed purpose, other than to grow up and flourish as all living creatures strive for. It does not promote one final destination to be reached, other than 'to play earnestly and to be earnest playfully' (Michael Oakshott) and lead a meaningful life, whatever that may be. Arnold Cornelis states that a purpose is a threefold hypothesis, because we assume that:
1. We know what we want
2. We know how to reach our goal
3. When we have reached it, it will still be what we want.

The conditions for the next system have to be present as potentials, to be able to unfold. Cornelis speaks of the 'un-doubling' of the system. The process of un-doubling involves a catharsis, which he defines as an emotional liberation out of an out-dated knowledge system. Catharsis enables the nestling of emotions in a new knowledge system, a layer of stability, bringing new thoughts and seeing new possibilities. Catharsis is shown in Figures 5-1 to 5-5 as blunt transitions between the systems. For an individual, catharsis is called adolescence and midlife crises. If the conditions are not right, the next system is not created. Apes and humans are distinguished from other animals in our evolution by increased self-awareness. This affects how we deal with others, because we make a distinction between self and other, leading to higher forms of empathy such as sympathy and targeted helping (Waal, 2005, p. 185). Development of children, and development of organisations, parallels the transformation during our evolution by increased self-awareness.

Operationalisation of the Logic of Feeling

Over the years, I used the Logic of Feeling as a stepping-stone for a lot of change concepts and management models (see my online handbook on organisational change (Zouwen, 2010a)). Table 5-1 gives a summary of operational, observable aspects of the three knowledge systems, in relation to a broad range of concepts. In this summary, I choose the aspects I think most relevant in building a framework for sustainable change.

My conclusion is that for an intervention to be effective, the approach should fit the knowledge system that the main issue is playing in, and fit the stage of maturity of the organisation. My assumption is that LSI, or other participative interventions, are the right approach at moments of catharsis, to help unfold the Social System of rules into the Communicative self-steering System. This implies that an organisation has to be mature enough, providing a save enough environment in the Natural System and a mature enough Social System of rules. This seems quite logical. If people do not feel safe because they cannot trust each other, or if the physical conditions are not safe, it seems unlikely that open communication and reflection will occur. In Chapter 14, this assumption will be assessed against the evaluation of past LSIs.

Cornelis elaborates his logic on how he sees development for almost every level of human culture. The Logic of Feeling tries to integrate all aspects of life. Appendix 8 provides a summary of the development of stability layers in views on reality, knowledge and science.

Table 5-1: Operationalisation of aspects of the three knowledge systems in the theory of The Logic of Feeling

Aspects	Natural System	Social System	Communication system
Steering type	Internal	External	Communicative self-steering
Driving forces	Will, desire, libido	Economics	Language, creativity
Truth is	What you can observe	What meets the norms	Multiple and variable, relational determined
The world is constructed of	Facts, what you observe	Possibilities, explanations of where you are compared to a model	Meanings, why you are there
Reality is reproduced by (Chia, 1996)	Representation	Construction	Deconstruction
Type of thinking (Zohar, 1997)	Associative, trial and error, largely unconscious	Rational, following rules	Chaos thinking, creative
Influence is gained through:	Power, authority, adaptation	Agreements, rules and laws	Evaluation and communication
Mainly expressed in:	Mother tongue	Science and technology	Policies
Uncertainty is reduced by:	Removal of fear by motherly love and religion or myths	Removal of anger, by standardization, jurisdiction, assurance	Removal of grief, of depression, by testing validity of rules against values
Feelings expressed in communication:	Fear, love, care, trust, distrust, belonging	Anger, justice	Grief, sadness, recognition, fulfilment
Conflict resolution	Violence (verbal or physical)	Legal justice	Communication
Type of conversation (Stacey & Griffin, 2005)	Shadow themes, conscious and unconscious	Formal – legitimate, conscious themes	Free flowing shadow conversations
Community is focused on:	Diversity	Unity	Diversity in unity
Role of consultant/facilitator in development:	Educator, teacher	Expert, accountant, jurist, manager	Facilitator, co-producer, coach
Role of the participant (Miller & Rice 1967)	Receiver, assumption mode	Professional, work mode	Emancipation, reflection mode
Learning is focused on: (Jaworski 1996)	What you learn	How you learn	Why you learn

5.2 The Complex Social Responsive Theory

The fundamental motivation of human behaviour is the urge to relate (Ralph Stacey)

Organisations as patterns of relations and communication

The second theory providing building blocks for the framework is the 'Complex Responsive Social Theory' of Ralph Stacey (2003). Stacey takes a critical stance towards rules for conversations. He has a specific view on relations and communication. His theory is about dealing with complexity, exactly one of the conditions LSI is suitable for, and about relating in conversations, the main activity in the large group meetings of LSI. This theory adds to the Logic of Feeling with an explanation of how transformation of capacities in an organisation takes place through communication with a paradoxical transformational causality. His basic work, *Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics; the challenge of complexity* (2003) presents, just as the Logic of Feeling, a conceptually rich and elaborate theory, taking 486 pages to explain the theory. It is a risky enterprise to borrow some of his concepts, even more since I have a different view on some of his concepts and there are some conflicts with the Logic of Feeling. Nevertheless, I will try to describe the most essential concepts for the framework for sustainable change. Key notions of this theory are:

- Organisations are patterns of interaction between people, between human bodies
- Interaction is always communication which takes place in the medium of symbols
- Interaction is always power related, because in interaction, in relating, one is always simultaneously constraining and enabling each other's actions; relating is a complex responsive process
- Joint action is possible because complex responsive processes of relating are patterned in coherent, that is meaningful, ways
- Transformational change means changing conversation in a process of paradoxical transforming causality

Conversations, stories and narratives are complex responsive processes of symbols interacting with each other, to produce emergent themes of meaning that organise experience of those engaged in the conversation (Stacey, 2003, p. 350). Conversation comprises also the thoughts of individuals. Stacey calls thoughts 'silent conversations'. All our thoughts get their meaning in social interaction. There is no distinction between individual and group, they emerge simultaneously. Individuals form groups while being formed by them at the same time, as two aspects of the same process of human relating. The symbols are self-organising, in emerging themes. There are *legitimate*, acceptable themes, and *shadow*, not/less acceptable themes, related to the official stated ideology of the group. The official stated ideology emerged from shadow conversations some time ago. Another distinction between symbols is related to the formality of the themes. *Formal* themes are identified in terms of an organisation's purpose, the role it promises to fulfil in its larger community, in terms of membership, roles, tasks and purposes. *Informal* themes take a narra-

tive form, they concern all personal and social relationships not formally defined by roles or tasks (Stacey, 2003, p. 368).

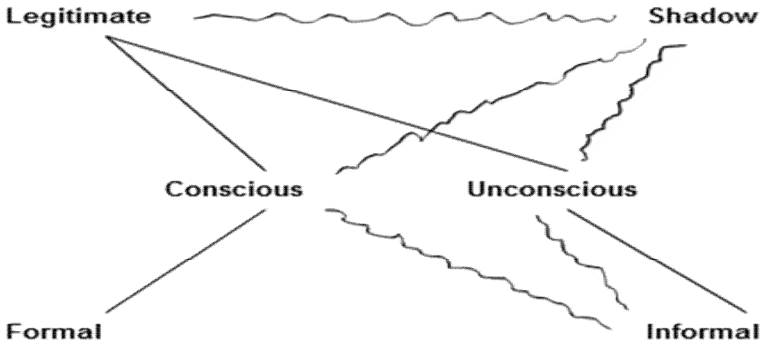


Figure 5-4: Legitimate and Shadow interactions between themes in conversations (Stacey, 2003, p. 370)

Figure 5-4 shows how the different types of themes and interactions are related. Formal themes, organising experience, are also conscious and legitimate. Formal-legitimate-conscious themes are i.e. plans, budgets and management systems. This is depicted in the figure as the straight-line connections between these categories. These are the organising themes that strategic choice theory focuses attentions on (Stacey, 2003, p. 370). Personal ambition and interpersonal rivalries are all part of every conversation. This brings in organising themes of an informal and a shadow nature. The wavy lines represent the shadow interactions. Informal-shadow-unconscious themes preserve ongoing power differences (Stacey, 2003, p. 373).

What is the connection between the Complex Social Responsive Theory and the Logic of Feeling? The Logic of Feeling is based on the assumption that everything that lives wants to grow. This puts relationships between living things under immediate pressure of competition and collaboration, making them a power-loaded relation. Stacey states that relations are always enabling and constraining at the same time. In nature, many organisms die before they mature and reproduce; this is compensated for by abundance of specimen. In a similar way, many organisations die prematurely. In the Natural System, the themes of conversations are shadow and for the large part unconscious themes. The Social System is built through legitimate, formal and conscious themes. To build the Communicative self-steering System, new themes need to emerge in a transforming process of changing conversations. The fundamental requirement for transformation is non-average, deviant, maverick or eccentric behaviour (Stacey, 2003, p. 375). My assumption is that the principles an LSI process, such as working with an unusually large and diverse group of stakeholders, provide the conditions for 'cross fertilisation in meetings of different disciplines', and 'lack of perfection in communication', required for transformation as shown in Figure 5-5.

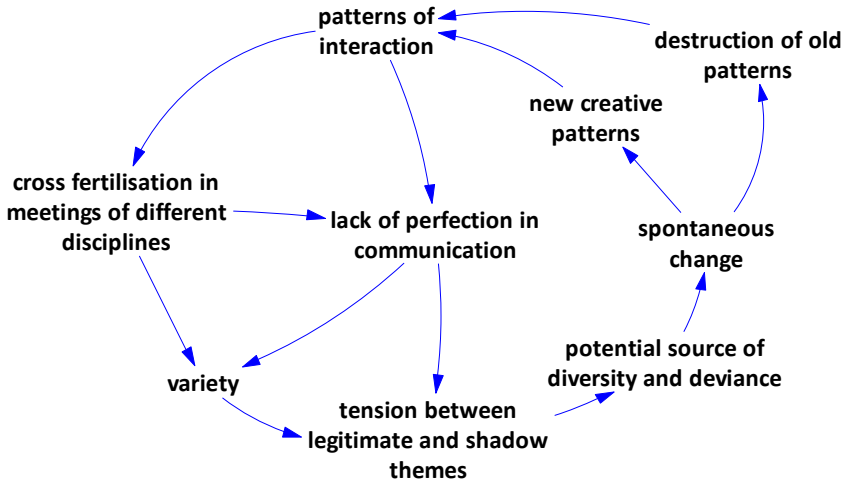


Figure 5-5: Transformation of conversations, according to the theory of Complex Responsive Processes (Stacey, 2003)

Communication as non-verbal process

According to Stacey, communication is essentially non-verbal, because we are working with images, with symbols, that people give and take (Stacey, 2003). A symbol is arbitrary: there is no inherent connection between the symbol and the meaning given to it. Whether or not someone agrees with a meaning is determined by feeling and is expressed in motivation: acceptance of the meaning as a meaning of steering. Both language and body produce symbols. The two systems of language and body are linked in unconscious logic: the models of reality we have. Giving meaning to experiences in organisations is a process Karl Weick calls *sensemaking* (Weick, 1995). It is a collaborative process of creating shared awareness and understanding out of different individuals' perspectives. I will use this perspective to interpret LSI in Section 14.5.

Transforming, paradoxical causality

Transforming causality (Stacey, 2003, p. 390) means that interaction is iterated in each present as repetition or habit and at the same time as potential transformation. Transformation encompasses both gradual and dramatic change. This is a paradoxical causality; it is predictable and non-predictable at the same time, it aids continuity and transformation at the same time, it leads to creation and destruction. Paradoxical causality implies that opposites can be true at the same time, in different knowledge systems. In order to be able to evaluate sustainable change through a highly complex approach as LSI, a paradoxical causality brings a good perspective.

Sustainable change is an oxymoron
Marvin Weisbord (personal conversation 2008) states: "Sustainable change is an oxymoron. You try to create the system that you believe in every moment of the day. Every meeting should be a microcosm of the way you believe the system to be as much as you can. You try to create a transformation, to create a system you believe in, at the same time you have to iterate that interaction in each present as repetition or habit. We have to live and work with a paradoxical causality. In LSI, working participatively is both a condition and a result. Leaders play a central role in sustaining change. New leaders can ruin everything accomplished in the LSI".

5.3 Towards a model for evaluation of intervention effectiveness for sustainable change

Change as collective learning in organising systems

Cornelis' model The Logic of Feeling, combined with the paradoxical view by Stacey of sustainable change as a complex responsive social process, offers a framework for evaluation of intervention effectiveness for sustainable change. I have called this framework the 'Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication'. Sustainable change is defined as developing the communicative self-steering capacities within the organisation, which expresses in changing conversations. Conversations are complex responsive processes of symbols interacting with each other, to produce emergent themes of meaning that organise the experience of those engaged in the conversation. Symbols are also embedded in the setting, i.e. the conditions created for gatherings of people. This is relevant for this research on sustainable change with LSI, since LSI is a socio-technical approach, rather than a behavioural approach, as described in Section 4.3. The intention is to invite new communication and action to emerge, and not trying to bring about change by 'working on the behaviour' of people (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). By organisation, I mean a work system with a common task. This may correspond to a business or institution, but it can also refer to a department, a project organisation or network.

Although I borrow concepts from both theories, there are important differences. I do not share the opinion of Stacey concerning systems thinking. He sees systems and systems thinking as a mistake, as focusing on non-existing wholes. Nevertheless, he speaks of processes in the group and in the wider group. I see systems as temporally defined 'wholes' for practical reasons, not as a static, closed or 'really existing group'. With the quote of Yogi Berra in mind "In theory there is no difference between theory and practice, in practice there is", I think my interpretation of systems thinking fits the paradoxical nature of change processes discussed before.

The Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication: a model for development of collective learning

Figure 5-6 represents my model the Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication as the development of capacities to deal with change, defined as collective learning, the ability to see more possibilities and use them to achieve the organisation's goals (Cornelis, 1993). Collective learning enables the organisation to grow and blossom, to grow up, as it were. Therefore, I do not speak of

'the learning organisation', because this term suggests that learning itself is the goal. Not all collaborations blossom, because obstacles can inhibit collective learning.

Each individual in his/her existence, goes through the entire history of the culture, just as each individual goes through the entire history of biological evolution. Organisations also progress from *unconscious* in the Natural System, through *normative* in the Social System, and finally to *communicative* in the Communicative self-steering System. Learning takes place at the level of the individual and the organisation. Collective learning pertains to all aspects of the organisation, aspects in the Natural System, as well as in the Social System of rules and in the System of Communicative self-steering. Cornelis talks respectively about zero, first, and second-order learning for the collective. I adopted this terminology for the model (see Figure 5-6).

Classification of learning levels
Although this classification in zero, first, and second-order collective learning resembles the categories single, double and triple loop learning of Chris Argyris (1991) and André Wierdsma (1999), the interpretation is different. Single-loop learning for the collective is situated in the Social System of rules, and not in the most basic system, the Natural System of Cornelis (1993)

The three phases/layers in the development process have three fundamental, but different driving forces. In Phase 1, individuals collaborate because of individual gains. The driving force is each person's will power to grow.

In Figure 5-6, the arrows pointing to the left indicate the learning obstacles which may occur in a particular phase of development. I call these obstacles 'blockades' since they are based on the 'fixations' as defined by André Wierdsma (1999). The ascending line in the figure traces the construction of the ideal situation. Following the causal loops of Figure 5-2, the blockades presented in Figure 5-5 can be logically derived for each knowledge system. The first blockade occurs when the driving force of the system is too weak, while the second blockade occurs when the driving force is too strong. I will hereafter provide for each phase a description of the ideal situation and of the learning blockades which may occur in that phase (Zouwen, 2007, 2010c)

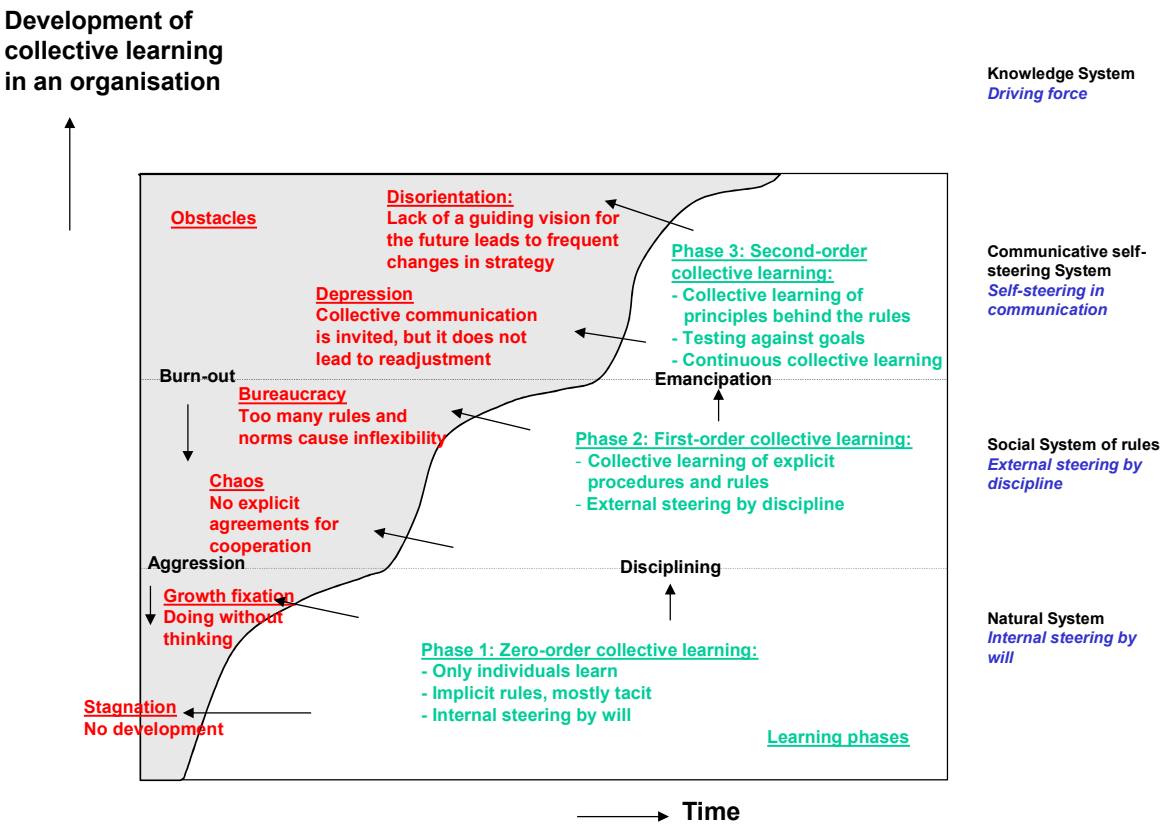


Figure 5-6: The logic of Will, Discipline and Communication;
a model for development of collective learning in an organisation

Phase 1: Development of the Natural System: growth through will

The organisation is geared to growth by doing, that is the capacities and internal will power of the relevant persons are decisive. Unconscious experiences in relationships, such as power relations and character attributes play a major role. There are often still only a few explicit rules of play. In the ideal situation, management pays attention to the staff. People feel at home, as if they belong there. The working conditions are such that people feel safe in the organisation.

Learning obstacles in the Natural System are:

1. Stagnation: If there is too little will, then growth will stagnate. This can occur because people are afraid to make mistakes, are unsure, or do not feel at ease. The prevalent feeling is fear of new steps.
2. Growth fixation: If there is too much will, then people run the risk of being crushed under the weight of their own drive for growth because things are not well organised. On the

other hand, work may get bogged down in a power struggle due to political games that do not contribute to collective development. The prevalent feeling is aggression, which manifests itself in a strong drive.

In this phase, the collective does not learn. Cornelis calls this 'zero-order' learning because, for the collective, the degree of freedom to choose is zero. Those with power determine what must be done. Individuals can indeed choose. They can start a power struggle or leave the organisation. Learning obstacles in Natural Systems have everything to do with status and losing face. Deviant behaviour can be very threatening to others and can result in counteraction, which precludes lasting application of what has been learned. The story you tell must fit in with "that's how we do things here". Stagnation and growth fixation can cause the premature death of the organisation.

Phase 2: Development of the Social System of rules: professionalisation via discipline

As an organisation is further developed, good agreements are needed to enable collaboration for efficient operational management. These can range from simple working agreements and administrations to complex management and information systems, depending on the nature and size of the organisation. People make explicit rules and structures for operational management and for the required professional skills. If everything is in place, rules and structures are also regularly checked for proper functioning. The cycle of planning and control is born. The collective learns to deal with the explicit rules. The drive for development from the Natural System is controlled by the discipline of the Social System of rules. If everything is in place, then people will have the feeling that they are working in a just and well-organised organisation.

Learning obstacles in the Social System are:

3. Chaos: If there is too little discipline for making good agreements or fulfilling them, then people do not learn to work together efficiently. A great deal of time and energy is spent looking for information and reinventing the wheel. Things are not organised correctly, and people are treated unfairly. This causes anger.
4. Bureaucracy: There is too much discipline. People cannot break away from the existing procedures and rule systems. New ideas do not get a chance because they do not fit in with the existing norms. If there are problems, then people grasp for still more planning and control, more procedures and more analyses of the structures. They do not get any further than learning the existing norms. The prevalent feeling is oppression due to the restrictions from an excess of rules.

This phase features 'first-order learning' for the collective. This concerns avoiding mistakes made in the past by making and adjusting rules and systems to complete the cycle of plan-do-check-act.

Learning obstacles in the Social System of rules have everything to do with justice, namely just design and application of rules for allocation of staff and resources. If a large group of people feel they are being treated unfairly, then there will be a great deal of anger. Over time, the entire col-

lective could regress back to phase 1. In this case, the conflict is no longer being fought via the agreed rules in the social rule system, but rather via interpersonal violence (physical or verbal) in the Natural System.

Phase 3: Development of self-steering: come to fruition via communication

To become and maintain the desired organisation in the face of changing circumstances requires innovation. The more possibilities people can see and avail themselves of as a collective, the better they can follow a meaningful course as an organisation. However, innovation requires the willingness to revise the existing situation and the existing rules of play. This calls for collective development of reflection and communication capabilities. This applies even more so because the rules of play from the Natural System, i.e. the internal logic of 'that's how we do things here', is largely unconscious. In an organisation with a system for communicative self-steering, people feel recognised in their contribution to the organisation and people feel like they are doing meaningful work. Now we have 'second-order collective learning': people collectively learn not only rules, but also steering of (and contribution to) the learning process.

Learning obstacles in the Communicative System are:

5. Depression: There is in fact communication regarding the state of affairs, but this does not result in readjustment. People say one thing and do another. People do not feel like they are being taken seriously. Rules are in fact being evaluated, but no insight is gained into the principles behind the rules. People do feel at home, operational management is well organised, but people feel like they are busy with the wrong things. New ideas do not get the recognition they deserve. This depresses people. In severe cases, this results in burnout or even self-destruction.
6. Disorientation: A great deal of reflection and communication takes place and the course is drastically changed on a regular basis. Reorganisations, change projects and system implementations come one after another. Consultants are in and out and a new development project starts as the last one is ending. Due to all the course changes, substantial goals are not attained. People get frustrated and distressed because they are always taking on something new and because there is no shared vision for a meaningful future.

If an organisation gets bogged down in communication and reflection and the direction does not mesh with what people as a whole think is vital, then lasting frustrations can cause the entire organisation to acquire destructive tendencies and regress to phase 2.

To conclude: this model describes three consecutive stages in organisational maturing. Each stage has a different fundamental driver. The model explains how, at each stage, different obstacles to learning and growth can emerge. These obstacles can cause frictions and regression in organisations. The model helps us to understand why emotions such as fear, anger and grief are indicators of different obstacles at different layers of the model, i.e. of different maturation stages.

5.4 The framework and sustainable change

Sustained effectiveness requires continuous change (Lawler III & Worley, 2006, p. 23)

The Logic of Feeling brings understanding of the chronological order of passing through the knowledge systems (Cornelis, 1993, p. 210), which is useful for understanding when interventions for organisational change are effective. The logic brings different questions, such as "Are we ready for it? Is there enough trust? Am I acknowledged as human being?" Communicative learning, second-order learning, is not a phase you start with, not as a person and not as an organisation (Cornelis, 1993, p. 621). There is a chronological order for going through the three knowledge systems: first we learn how to observe the material world and develop factual knowledge. Then we project our observations onto possibilities and impossibilities, creating a model of the Social System of rules. Finally, we develop steering knowledge, namely is it meaningful or not? The order is observation, action, evaluation and communication.

I define non-sustainable change as first-order collective learning, and sustainable change as second-order collective learning, as conceptualised in Section 5.3. This distinction of two levels of effectiveness can be recognised in concepts from other disciplines, for instance organisation theory, collaboration, business economy, social psychology. Appendix 7 provides a selection of perspectives on first-order and second-order effects from different concepts.

Communicative self-steering is not about looking for alternatives for informal or formal aspects, or about revealing the unwritten rules of the game in the Natural System. The organising themes, legitimate and shadow, formal and informal (Stacey & Griffin, 2005), all keep playing their roles.

According to the concept of transforming causality by Stacey this means the principles of LSI have to be continuously sustained.

5.5 Summary: Sustainable and non-sustainable change

Over-emphasis of rationality and language in organisational change literature and models calls for another model, honouring time, feelings and creativity as well as skills and ratio. In this chapter I have developed a framework for evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions, The Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication. The framework is based on the Logic of Feeling by Arnold Cornelis (1993) and the Complex Social Responsive Theory by Ralph Stacey (2003).

Sustainable change does not mean 'sustaining the status quo', but building of capacity to deal with changing situations in a desirable way. Sustainable change means that the change 'ripples off'. The rippling off shows as (Jac Geurts, personal conversation 2008):

- Not only here, but also there
- Not only now but also then
- Not only on us but also on them.

As described in Chapter 4, practitioners of Large Scale Interventions claim to establish sustainable change. This means the interventions facilitate the 'unfolding' of first-order collective learning in the Social System of rules in an organisation into second-order collective learning in the new knowledge System of Communicative self-steering. According to the framework, this will only be possible under the right conditions, if the organisation is mature enough, if it has outreached the possibilities of the Social System of rules (catharsis).

The effectiveness of LSI can be evaluated on two levels:

1. Non-sustainable change, showing in first-order or incremental effects. These are effects to get more work done, they do not challenge the status quo, are not transformational but transactional. They do not 'ripple off'.
2. Sustainable effects, showing in second-order or transformational effects. They shift the norms in relationships and communication. They cause the change to 'ripple off'.

The next step is to build an instrument to evaluate concrete LSIs, using the categories of the research model for evaluation of interventions as described in Section 3.7, in combination with the framework for sustainable change contained in this Chapter. This will be done in the next Chapter.

6 Developing an evaluation instrument

Not what people say, but what they do matters most (Jac Vennix)

6.1 Exploring general experience for observable success factors and effects

The questions "What is LSI?" and "What is sustainable change?" have been answered in Chapter 0 and 5 respectively. The next episode in the journey concerns a search for observable criteria to evaluate effectiveness of an LSI trajectory. Following the research approach Naturalistic Inquiry as described in Chapter 3, I invite the reader on a journey into LSI practice, to explore general experience for observable success factors and effects. The journey takes us to network conferences and workshops, interviews with practitioners, email correspondence, websites, and to more than 50 LSI cases documented in literature. Data gathering and analyses of success factors and effects will be purposefully guided by the categories from the research model of Figure 3-4. The categories Context/Task, Client, Consultant, Intervention and Effectiveness serve as a framework for ordering the factors and effects.

The exploration results in a set of observable measures for the effectiveness of an LSI trajectory. Next, by adding evaluation methods to this set of criteria an evaluation instrument will be built.

6.2 Analysis of a diversity of reports: Testimonials and observations

> **Integration of disciplined science, creative artistry, and personal reflexivity**
> Michael Patton concludes on qualitative analyses and interpretation (Patton, 2001, p. 432): *"*In this complex and multi-faceted analytical integration of disciplined science, creative artistry, and personal reflexivity, we mould interviews, observations, documents, and field notes into findings.*"*

To establish trustworthiness, I have used multiple methods and multiple sources in looking for success factors and effects. To decrease publication bias, a risk mentioned in Section 2.4, I have used both published and unpublished documents, formal and informal stories and added some personal experiences. The set of success factors and effects have been distilled from the following types of experiences:

1. Workshops and interviews with practitioners during meetings of LSI networks
2. Testimonials of LSI cases in books and articles
3. Online communication in LSI networks
4. Internet platform for discussing this research project: the Wiki www.tonnievanderzouwen.nl/wiki
5. My own experiences with LSI trajectories as a practitioner and trainer.

An overview of all sources is given in Appendix 4. In the following paragraphs, each type of experience will be described.

Ad 1. Workshops and interviews with practitioners during meetings of LSI networks

I attended several meetings of LSI practitioners. My interviews and observations focused on the main questions: "What are your experiences with the sustainable effects of LSI? What do we have to look for? Where should I look? What do you consider valid measures/observables for sustainable effects, e.g. collective learning? What questions should we ask in our interviews and case studies?"

The first network meeting I attended was the two-day Learning Exchange of the Future Search Network (FSN) in South Africa, in November 2007. I made notes and took photos of relevant activities. On the second day, I hosted a 1,5 hour Open Space session on the issue 'What do you look for when you look for impact, for the sustainable effects of Future Search?'. In total six people participated. I recorded the conversation and made notes. Figure 6-1 gives an impression of location and activities.

Aloe Ridge, conference location near Johannesburg

Interview with practitioners Grethie and Mechtild

Analyses of impact factors of Future Search

Learning Exchange meeting with practitioners of Future Search

Figure 6-1: Impressions of the Learning Exchange Future Search Network, November 2007, South Africa

My second meeting with LSI practitioners was a conference held by the Society for Organisational Learning (SoL), the SoL Global Forum 2008, in Oman. I hosted a stall (a type of poster session) during a three-day Learning Souq. The theme of my stall was 'Learning from Large Scale Interventions'. I asked visitors to my stall to share their experiences and ideas, and I invited them to come to my 1,5 hour workshop, advertised as 'Research Lab'. In the Research Lab, planned for the third day of the conference, I presented the research design, followed by a group discussion on the effectiveness of LSI with seven participants. The discussion was recorded and later on transcribed. Participants of the lab were LSI practitioners familiar with the Large Group Methods World Café, Open Space, and Real Time Strategic Change/mixed designs. Figure 6-2 shows the Learning Souq, my Souq Stall, and a group discussion.

The Learning Souq

Souq Stall with information on LSI and invitation to the research lab

Souq Stall visitors

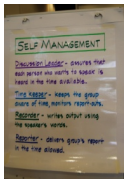
Research table

Figure 6-2: SoL Global Forum 2008, Learning Souq, and Research Lab on 16 April 2008, Muscat, Oman

What is a Learning Souq?
A Middle Eastern Souq activates our sensing and feeling, more than our thinking. The many sensations offered cause us to defer analysis of our first impressions, as we encounter the beautiful unfamiliar images, colours, scents and sounds. While taking in (and talking about) these sensations we can slip into a mode that Otto Scharmer (Theory U) would describe as sensing and co-sensing. The sensations are stronger perhaps because they may not be part of our culture and our responses shift to occurring on the heart level, as a deeper plane of mind. The Design Team creates a 'Learning Souq' as a space that begins with such sensations and gently leads everyone to engage with it as a unique and adventurous meeting place for playing with ideas. There are two teams of players in this adventurous playground of ideas, namely 'Souq Hosts' and 'Souq Explorers'. Our initiating parameters have emerged as a framework that a Design Team member, also a Souq Host, realised is 'a self-organising system we are engaged in creating' and we invite you to think of it in this way. (Text derived from the invitation letter of the Design Team for the SoL Global Forum 2008)

In August 2008, I attended the three-day workshop 'Managing a Future Search', in Tampere, Finland. The workshop was organised by the FSN, and facilitated by Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff. In the workshop, the principles and history of FS were explained. Organising and facilitating a FS were practised in a three-day simulation of a FS. The instruction book and my notes and photos served as sources of success factors and effects. On the third day of the workshop, I conducted an interview with Marvin Weisbord, one of the founders of Future Search. The interview was recorded and transcribed.

Facilitation of a planning meeting in a FS



Principle of self-management in a FS

Exploring the present in a FS, discovery of relevant trends

Figure 6-3: Workshop 'Managing a Future Search', August 2008, Tampere, Finland

Ad 2. Testimonials of LSI cases in books and articles

I have gathered over 50 testimonials for LSIs, mostly self-reported by practitioners in books and articles. Appendix 4 presents a list of references used for the analyses. The procedure of the text analyses will be discussed in Section 6.3.

> **Correlation between event and implementation**
> Barbara Bunker and Billie Alban, editors of 'The Handbook by Large Group Methods' (Bunker & Alban, 2006), compared several cases reported in their book. They state (2006, p. 321): "These cases helped us see what we had not seen before; there is a strong correlation between a successful implementation and the state of the organisation's culture. The more successful the initial event, the more urgent it is that the long-term task is to create new ways of working within the organisation that will both facilitate the implementation and support a new pattern for addressing subsequent issues."

Ad 3. Online communication in LSI networks

To improve my own LSI practice, and to keep in touch with other practitioners, I became a member of the Future Search Network, the Open Space Network and the World Café community. Since 2008, I have joined discussions and followed developments, via:

- Listserv OS and FS
- Newsletters World Café
- Newsletter FS
- Websites www.futuresearch.net, www.openspaceworld.org, www.theworldcafe.com

I have screened these sources for success factors and effects.

Ad 4. Internet platform to discuss this research on LSI: Wiki

In the workshop I hosted in Oman, one of the participants came up with the idea of continuing the discussion and sharing information about my research project, by starting a Wiki (Zouwen, 2008a). I launched the Wiki in May 2008 and invited everyone who had signed up for information at my Souq Stall. The Wiki serves as a platform for people who are interested in this research project. The making of the Wiki turned out to be a helpful way of structuring my own thinking about the research process, because texts on the internet have to short and to the point. The Wiki as vehicle for doing intervention research will be further discussed in Section 15.4.

Ad 5. Personal experience with LSI

In addition, my personal experiences have produced 'working hypotheses' about context factors influencing the effectiveness of LSI. In the last five years, I have facilitated 15 LSIs, including Open Spaces, Future Searches/Search Conferences, World Cafés and RTSCs/mixed design Large Group Interventions. Furthermore, I have been a participant in several Large Group meetings.

Some of my own experience with LSI:
Reflections as a participant of the World Café in Vienna: I see a happy family, sitting a lot, critics are listened to but not answered, facilitator crying with emotion, graphics are nice, but I find them so complex and over-full that I could not see the wood for the trees, to my mind no substantial follow-up, except strengthening of the World Café network. I have some very positive experiences in meeting the primary goals and exceeding the expectations of clients, but I have no sight on longer-term effects: as a consultant, I leave most of the time shortly after the LGI.

6.3 Text analyses of reported LSIs results in a list of factors and indicators

In the summer of 2008, I started analysing the texts of reported LSI cases, from books and articles. At first, this was meant to be an addition on the findings of workshops and interviews. While reading the texts, I realised I needed a method to analyse the texts systematically, so I 'invented' my own text analyses work form: I skimmed all texts with a 5-colour marker. Each colour represents a category (or group of categories) of success factors and the two levels of effects (as defined in Chapter 5):

- **Green** = Preconditions (Context/Task, Client, Consultant)
- **Orange** = Working elements (Intervention)
- **Blue** = First-order effects (non-sustainable effects)
- **Yellow** = Second-order effects (sustainable effects)

While reading I came across other helpful information, so I added a colour:

- **Pink** = Trends, research issues, synonyms for LSI and LGI methods

I copied each of the marked items onto a small sticky-note (38x51 mm) of similar colours (since I could not find small blue notes, I chose light yellow for the non-sustainable effects and neon-yellow for the sustainable effects). Each note got a code, so the item can be tracked back to the original source. After reading a view articles, I started categorising and clustering the notes on large paper sheets, size A3. The main categories correspond with the colours from the sticky-notes, representing the main categories of the research model. While working, I added some main categories concerning useful information.

Through systematic and continuous comparison, I clustered 680 notes, comprising 599 notes for success factors and effects and 81 with other remarks useful for the research process, such as assumptions, synonyms, trends, and developments.

Figure 6-4 shows photos of the all A3-sheets. All notes are readable displayed on www.tonnievandezouwen.nl/wiki , on the page 'Evaluation instrument'.

Overview of notes

Conditions: Embedding, anchoring

Conditions: Culture and leadership

Conditions: Context and task

Conditions: Facilitator

Conditions: Timing and match

Conditions: Participants

Working elements: Self-management and reflection

Working elements: Facilitator

Working elements: Setting and information

Working elements: Design process

Working elements: Systems thinking

Working elements: Engagement

Working elements: Action planning

First-order effects: Action plans, shared vision, efficiency, awareness

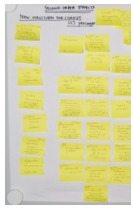
First-order effects: Energy, new relationships

First-order effects: Undesired side effects

Second-order effects: Collective learning

Second-order effects: Communication

Second-order effects: Inviting diversity



Second-order effects: LSI prolonged

Trends and developments

General remarks and synonyms

Assumptions

Figure 6-4: Clustering of sticky-notes with data of text-analyses,
into categories and sub-categories of success factors, effects and additional information on LSI

The total number of notes is relatively small compared to more indicative research such as Grounded Theory. The amount of notes can be lower, because the categories of the framework of the research model guided the sample strategy as well as the data analyses. Compared with Grounded Theory, the success factors and effects serve as to sensitising concepts, and the indicators form the 'codes' that evolved in constant comparing of data, derived from the exploration activities.

Reflection on the analysing method
Reflection note, research journal (15 July 2008): When I just started using the sticky-notes, I had some doubts about this method. Was it doable? I could have taken an article and copy clues directly into a concept text and do the clustering in the text, with the aid of a software program. Fortunately, it turned out to be a very effective method for me, for several reasons:
- No distraction or stress in arms and eyes from sitting behind my computer
- I am more flexible in movement and work location
- Producing the notes and the categorising goes rather quick
- It is easy to split or merge categories and subcategories
- I touch and read each building block several times (reading the article, screening for factors, copying, categorising, assembly into a table); patterns emerge while I am reading
- The bright colours of the sticky-notes cheered me up, during the long weeks of text analyses.

The items from the text analysis are wrapped up in a large table. The success factors and effects form the first column, and observable indicators form the second column. I called the table 'Evaluation Instrument'. The table was improved in a second and third round of reading articles, until no new factors or indicators came up. In qualitative research, when no new themes emerge it is a good indication that enough information has been collected in order to reach some useful conclusions. Saturation of categories, or closure, has been reached (J. D. Adams, 2003; Erlandson, et al., 1993; Zeeuw, 1991) (see also Section 3.7). In addition, a check on completeness of factors was performed in several member checks. The member checks will be presented in Chapter 8.

6.4 From checklist to evaluation instrument: Building an audit method

Extending the checklist of the Evaluation Table with evaluation methods

After completing the list of success factors and effects, I have added a third column 'evaluation method' to the table 'Evaluation instrument'. This column was filled with questions to ask and observables to look for, methods for evaluating every factor and effect. Figure 6-5 presents a sample page of the Evaluation Table. The full table is presented in Appendix 2. The questions were derived from the interviews and workshops. In particular the interview with Marvin Weisbord brought some crucial questions to ask 'after the dance'. I used my experience as an auditor of management systems (ISO 9000, ISO 14001, Total Quality systems) to match the methods and criteria.

In the Evaluation Table, the success factors and effects have been ordered according to the main categories of the research model: Context/Task, Client, Consultant, Intervention and Effectiveness. For each category, criteria emerged for success factors, for short-term effects and for sustainable effects. These criteria apply to all LSIs. The success factors and effects can be identified by observable indicators. The indicators form observable evidence, as a measure for the fulfilment of the relevant factor or effect. Indicators do not have to apply to every LSI; they can be specific to the Large Group Method being used in the LSI.

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
		Participants, client - Was it the right time for you to have the LGI?
4.2. Working with a planning group for all essential decisions regarding design, management, and logistics	- Planning team/ steering committee with key stakeholders, people who have the credibility and connections to get all the other participants to come - Planning team with diversity in perspectives, interests, identities, potential contributions; a cross section of the system - Knowledge and ability to select stakeholder groups, especially the under-bound groups - Facilitator helps the planning group find the common ground of interest across all the stakeholder groups - Awareness that whole system issues surface as prelude to the larger meeting; points of conflicts are elicited - Alternative designs with enough diversities are offered and discussed - An invitation strategy for getting people to commit to the meeting time - Invitation with strategic questions and a challenging title - Conscious attention is given to the inclusiveness of participants who represent alternative or opposing perspectives on the issue at hand - Division of responsibilities is clearly enunciated at a very early stage; participants are responsible for the outcomes of the large group conference - Planning group has enough confidence in the process	Reports of planning group meetings, invitation(s) Consultant, client, planning group members - How was the stakeholder analyses done? (ARE-IN model) - How did you feel about the invitation
4.3. Design is coherent with context, task, relations and directions	- Principles of LSI are respected in design, using them in combination - Adequate LGI method selected, limitations of the method are discussed - Awareness of pattern-setting activities that may amplify or dampen the effects of change after the large group meeting - Awareness that the mere categorization of people into different groups is a sufficient condition for negative stereotyping to develop - Enough time for preparation and invitation - Good timing of events considering the circumstances	Design, participant list, report LGI, reports planning team - Was the planning team a micro cosmos of the system? - Compare design with prescriptions LGI method: How many people were in-

Figure 6-5: Sample page of the Table Evaluation Instrument; see Appendix 2 for the full Evaluation Table

The set of success factors and effects with their indicators provide qualitative measures for an LSI, based on agreements between the users of the LSI, comparable with quality standards from the ISO 9000 family.

Constructing an audit matrix of questions and sources

To evaluate an LSI, a compliance assessment can be done by an auditor, or by a team of auditors. The auditor looks for evidence of compliance with the criteria, by asking questions, observing, and examining documents. Documents are defined as written or symbolic records, including photos, memos, and brochures. Documents play an important role for finding evidence, because what participants say does not have to correspond with what they do (Vennix, 1996; Weick, 1995). Answers have to be supported by observable evidence or be confirmed by evidence from other data sources.

Conformity or compliance assessment
Conformity assessment, also known as compliance assessment, is any activity to determine, directly or indirectly, that a process, product, or service meets relevant standards and fulfils relevant requirements; definition retrieved from Wikipedia,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conformity_assessment , 19 August 2010

Saturation is reached when enough convincing evidence has been found for compliance of a success factor or effect (Wolcott, 2001). This means the auditor does not have to ask the every stakeholder or data source the same question. Interviewing key players and analysing key documents is sufficient. The questions and sources have been derived from the column 'methods' of the table Evaluation Instrument (see Appendix 2). I combined them in a so-called 'Audit Matrix' of questions to ask and sources to use for answers. For the LSI Audit Matrix (see Appendix 3.1), I have selected as key people to interview:

- Client
- Project leader
- Consultant
- Participant of the Planning Group (also called Design Team or Project Group)
- Participants of the Large Group conference(s).

The following sources were selected as key documents:

- Strategy and policy plans of the Client
- Contract for the LSI between Client and Consultant
- Reports planning group meetings
- Design and program of the LGI
- Invitation(s) for the LGI
- Report(s) of the LGI
- Action plans
- Artefacts (side products).

Six basic kinds of questions for getting different types of data
Erlandson et al. (1993, pp. 88-89) describe six basic kinds of questions that can be used to get different types of data. The questions of the Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1 represent all six types:
- Experience/behaviour: eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviour, actions
- Opinion/value: goals, intention, desires, values (Was it worth the effort?)
- Feeling: understanding emotional responses
- Knowledge: factual information
- Sensory: determine what sensory stimuli respondents are sensitive to
- Background/demographic: understanding the respondent's education, previous experiences, age.

All interviews were conducted following the outline in Appendix 3.2. The outline is based on the advice of Erlandson et al. (1993, pp. 92-94) and Patton (2001), in order to provide the interviewee with information and to build trust. The outline topics are:

- Purpose of the inquiry
- Confidentiality, protection of the respondents: anonymous reports
- Final say over study content: member checks
- Duration and process of the interview
- Broad question as warm up: "How did you get into…"
- Questions in the Audit Matrix
- Closing.

Compliance assessment using a Score Table

After the data gathering, each indicator for every factor and effect will be scored in a Score Table. The Score Table for LSI consists of the list of success factors and effects, with their indicators, and the key stakeholders to be interviewed (see Appendix 3.3). An indicator is scored as 'complying' (+), 'non-complying' (-), or 'partly complying' (0).

Contradictions in evidence have to be cleared as much as possible, but some factors concern opinions where disagreement also counts as relevant evidence. Disagreement is scored as such (+/-) and an explanation is added in the column 'remarks'.

Appendix 3.3 presents a sample page of the Score Table of Case 1. For each factor, multiple indicators from multiple sources are scored with +, - , 0, or +/-. As can be seen in this example, when enough evidence is found for assessing compliance with a factor, it is not necessary to score every indicator for every source. The auditor then makes a judgement on the degree of compliance for this factor, and fills this in on the Score Chart for the Case, as ++, +, 0, -, or --. (see the example in Appendix 3.4). Then, the scores of all cases are copied into an overview, and highlighted with appealing colours, as shown in Appendix 3.7. This overview resembles the score tables often presented in consumer tests of, for instance, cars and household machines.

In this Chapter, an evaluation instrument has been built to assess the effectiveness of an LSI trajectory. How does the evaluation instrument work out in practice? Is it adequate and usable? In the next Chapter, the instrument will be tested and refined in a case study. The evaluation procedure will be further explained in Section 7.3, when the instrument is applied to three test cases, providing a reconstruction and evaluation of the effectiveness of three past LSIs.

7 Testing and improving the evaluation instrument: A case study

7.1 Reconstructing past LSIs

To test and improve the evaluation instrument, developed in Chapter 6, I have selected three past cases with LSIs. My hypothesis is that if a case is an LSI that fits the scope of this research project as defined in Section 4.9, and if it meets the main criteria for success, sustainable effects must be noticeable. In a case study past LSIs have been reconstructed, in order to evaluate their effectiveness, and in particular their contribution to sustainable change. For the three past LSIs, I have made a reconstruction by purposive sampling, using multiple methods and multiple sources, guided by the audit approach of the evaluation instrument.

This Chapter focuses on how the evaluation instrument was tested and improved. Contradictory to the principle of 'Show people the baby, not the labour' for writing up qualitative research, this Chapter presents some 'dirty details of the labour'. The 'baby', the thick description of the reconstructed cases, is presented in the Practical Guide, in Chapter 10. The effectiveness of the cases for sustainable change will be discussed in Chapter 13, where they serve as examples and illustration of how the effectiveness of past LSIs can be evaluated.

7.2 Selecting three cases

For the case study I was looking for information-rich cases, those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Erlandson, et al., 1993, p. 82). Since the success factors and effects form the sensitising concepts for the case study, there is a risk of finding only successes. A case with less satisfactory results should also therefore be examined. I have selected three cases using the following criteria:

- Meets the definition of an LSI trajectory for organisational change; stand-alone events are excluded
- Best-known, most-applied LGI methods (Future Search, Open Space, World Café, RTSC)
- Work systems, no communities central
- At least one year has passed between evaluation and the end of the LSI
- Extreme or deviant cases: ideal and less successful cases by reputation
- Convenience: accessible and feasible.

I have selected two cases which I facilitated myself. The sneak preview in Chapter 1 concerns these two cases. In both LSIs, I was one of the facilitators, together with the same colleague. Both LSIs concern a flock of primary schools directed by a central organisation. I consider Case 1 a successful process, but with Case 2, I was not satisfied. It worked, but in my opinion, it could have been much better. What caused the difference? The third case was facilitated by a colleague. It was consid-

ered to be a successful case, by reputation, concerning an innovation process in 12 public libraries. Chapter 10 provides a thick description of the cases.

7.3 Audit method: Detective looking for evidence

How many interviews are needed? What is the stopping rule? For the audit procedure of the evaluation instrument, I have applied targeted sampling. The more targeted the context of the interviews, the better the data and the fewer interviews will be necessary (Zeeuw, 1991). The key questions have to be asked of key players in a semi-structured interview, while the auditor keeps on looking for observables as evidence. The audit method facilitates openness in the interviews, because the auditor does not have to ask everyone every question. My interviews were very open, people were telling their story. The questions of the Audit Matrix in Appendix 3.1 served as guideline and check, but most of the time I did not have to ask the questions literally, because they had already been answered in the story. Where necessary, regarding the course of the interview and the position of my conversation partner I adapted the formulation of the question to the situation. I sometimes used photos of the LSI to refresh the memory. It turned out to be important to keep on asking for observable things, to deconstruct container terms like 'atmosphere' and 'better collaboration' into verifiable evidence. A good question is "How do you notice …". I collected critical incidents as examples. A powerful question for closing the interview was: "Is there anything you want to say that I have not asked about? Something you want to add? Have I missed anything?".

7.4 Case analyses: Method and steps, a look into the research kitchen

The data gathering resulted in a pile of material to be analysed, consisting of:

- Transcriptions and notes from interviews with key players and stakeholders: client, project manager, a participant of the planning group, a participant of the Large Group meeting, consultants/facilitators
- A 'footprint' of the LSI in documents: contract, reports planning group, design/scenario conference, report conference, emails, website, photos
- Notes from personal observations: photos, professional log, reflective interview notes on atmosphere of buildings and conversations.

Next, all data needed to be analysed, guided by the purpose of the case study, namely to test and improve the evaluation instrument and to evaluate the effectiveness of each specific case. To get an overview of the characteristics, conclusions and illustrations of each case and to collect conclusions for the case description and the evaluation instrument, I again decided to work with sticky-notes, this time on flip charts on the wall. I set up my dining room as 'war room' for 6 weeks (see the photos in Figure 7-1).

Research kitchen at the start

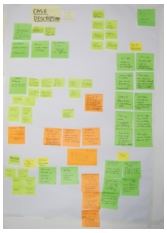
After 2,5 weeks

After 5 weeks

Building blocks Case 1

Building blocks Case 2

Building blocks Case 3



Case description elements

Case study input

Findings success factors

Findings effects

Figure 7-1: A look into the research kitchen, images of 6 weeks of case analyses

The colours of the sticky-notes in Figure 7-1 have a specific meaning: dark yellow for conclusions and essentials of a case, large light yellow ones for literal quotes, pink for insights regarding the evaluation instrument, orange for insights or essentials for the description of the case study, green for writing directions. Note: In the original high resolution photos the text is readable and they are available on the Wiki under the page 'Case study' (Zouwen, 2008a).

For each case, I took the following analytical steps:

1. Transcription of the interviews, largely done by two students; it took them ca. 4 hours to transcribe a one- hour recording
2. Close listening to the interview recording, while reading and completing the transcription, supported by the notes of my observations during the interview

3. While listening to the recording and reading the transcription, reflections and ideas pop up; I record them on sticky-notes
4. Analyse the printed transcription and mark with colour markers the success factors and effects (same colours as before) in the printed text; text analysis of 1 interview hour takes 3 to 4 hours
5. Score the success factors and effects in the corresponding column of the Score Table (see Appendix 3.3)
6. While scoring, make corrections and improvements in the Score Table: combining items, reformulating, re-ordering, deleting some doubles or 'unobservable' indicators
7. Search for additional evidence of success factors and effects in documents and artefacts (contract, reports of the planning group, design, conference report, photos, my logbook from two years ago with reflections on my experience as facilitator of Case 1 and Case 2)
8. Complete the scoring of the case (see Appendix 3.6)
9. Make the next version of the Score Table (see Appendix 3.3)
10. Make the next version of the Audit Matrix with the interview questions (see Appendix 3.1)
11. Reflect on the case description and the case study in general and make notes on sticky-notes
12. Keep a journal of my actions, outcomes and reflections during the process of the case analyses.

I started with Case 3, the one that I did not facilitate. Then I analysed Case 1 and 2, more or less together, comparatively. The contrast between the successful Case1 and the less successful Case 2 sharpened my view on how to score the indicators.

Reflection on the analysis process
Personal log, 29 July 2009: Although the analysis of interviews calls for discipline and persistence (and a lot of time), it is not disagreeable to do. I realised how rich my data are and how much deepening they bring. In addition, I feel lucky combining business and pleasure: How nice it is to sit on my terrace, the cat lying at my feet, with the headphone on and all my other stuff on the table and call it WORK.

Figure 7-2: Analysing work on the terrace

For Case 1, all interviews have been literally transcribed. For Case 2 and 3 all interviews were transcribed for the most part. While listening to the recording of the interviews, the transcriptions were compared with the handwritten notes, in order to find out what the surplus value of the transcriptions was. When the evaluation instrument has been fully developed, a complete tran-

scription of an interview will not be necessary anymore. The procedure will then become: make notes during the interview, listen to recording, complete notes, mark the indicators for success factors and effects, distil illustrative quotes and score the case.

7.5 Results of the case study: Rich stories and deeper insights into the effectiveness of LSI

The case study produced two types of results. Firstly, an improved evaluation instrument was made. The improvements will be discussed in Section 7.6. Secondly, it resulted in an evaluation of the effectiveness of three past LSIs. To what extent did they produce sustainable change? The cases serve as an example of how the effectiveness can be evaluated. The results and conclusions have been integrated in the Practical Guide of Part 3. Chapter 10 offers a thick description of each case, including the effects after two years. In Chapter 13, the evaluation procedure and scores will be presented in detail, as examples of how a past LSI can be reconstructed and evaluated.

The case study also produced rich stories and deeper insights into what makes an LSI work or not and how this can be observed in practice. These stories are presented as illustrations of success factors and effects in Chapters 11 – 13.

7.6 Improvements to the evaluation instrument

I started with a long and exhaustive list of success factors and possible effects, derived from the exploratory phase. While knowing that not all items are as important when measuring the effectiveness, I did not know which ones to choose beforehand. It reminded me of the famous quote by John Wanamaker: “I know that half of my advertising dollars are wasted….., I just do not know which half”. Altogether, I made more than ten versions of the Audit Matrix, Score Table detailed level, Score Table overview level and the Evaluation Instrument. While analysing the third case, no more changes in success factors or effects were necessary, while only the formulation style was improved. This can be considered a sign of saturation or closure (Zeeuw, 1991).

Further testing of the evaluation instrument was done by four students from Tilburg University. They used the instrument as part of their research for their master theses in Organisation Studies, under my supervision. In total, they evaluated seven LSIs. In general, they experienced the instrument as usable, although they had some recommendations for further improvement. Judith Poppelaars (2010) evaluated two LSIs, both with a one-day Open Space as LGI. Noortje van de Mortel (2010) evaluated a lengthy Whole Scale Change trajectory with several LGIs. Pieter Adema (2010) reconstructed the effectiveness of an LSI with a three-day World Café. Mark Hummel (2010) focused on the preconditions with his research question “What determines the choice for LSI, and is it the right choice, considering the preconditions?”. He evaluated the preconditions of four LSIs with mixed designs. It has to be taken into account that they did not have any prior experience

with an LSI process and they had to depend on my instructions as to how to use and interpret the indicators of the instrument. I have summarised their remarks and recommendations as follows:

1. The scoring of contra-indications: be clear that if no evidence is found, this should be scored positively in the Score Table

2. If you have not had any experience with an LSI yourself, some criteria are difficult to imagine and hence difficult to evaluate in the Score Table (Poppelaars, 2010)

3. Successions of leaders during and since the LSI may have deep impact on the effectiveness. Every new leader has his own ideas on change; often new commitment to sponsor the LSI has to be gained. Continued support of a sponsor is important. As a consequence, not only leaders at the time of the LSI, but also current leaders should be interviewed (Poppelaars, 2010)

4. For auditors with little experience of LSI processes and with Naturalistic Inquiry, the list of variables is immense, making it harder to analyse the data from interviews and documents. Pieter Adema (2010) suggests making a standardised questionnaire and sending it to a large group of relevant respondents, setting up the score chart on a quantitative basis, and completing the Score Chart based on the open interview. I did not adopt this suggestion because it does not fit in the iterative process of auditing. However, it might be worth experimenting with it, since a standardised questionnaire offers the option of involving more stakeholders in the evaluation and a quantified view on effectiveness.

7.7 From evaluation instrument to Practical Guide

In order to contribute to more effective use of LSI, which is the major goal of the research journey, the evaluation instrument, tools, procedures and illustrations have to be available for professionals and clients in a practical format. For this reason, all guidelines and tools have been assembled into a prototype of a Practical Guide to LSI. The format of the Guide has been borrowed from a practical guide for a medical treatment, since medicine is a discipline with massive experience in evidence based information leaflets for clients and experts.

Format of the Practical Guide for LSI is based on Guide for medical treatment
The Practical Guide for Identification, Evaluation and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults (NIH Publication Number 00-4084 October 2000) served as model. This Guide was developed cooperatively by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity (NAASO) and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). It is based on the Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: Evidence Report developed by the NHLBI Expert Panel and released in June 1998. The Expert Panel used an evidence based methodology to develop key recommendations for assessing and treating overweight and obesity patients. The goal of the Practical Guide is to provide the tools professionals need to effectively manage their overweight and obese adult patients.

The Practical Guide for LSI is meant to enhance effective use of LSI by professionals in three stages:

1. Before the start: to assess the preconditions
2. During the LSI: as a guideline for design and management
3. Afterwards: to evaluate the effectiveness of the LSI.

To reach this goal, the Practical Guide has to be usable for a variety of stakeholders (clients, researchers, consultants, students), and the guidelines and tools have to be validated as adequate. A member check is needed, as discussed in Section 3.6. The next Chapter reports how a member check was conducted by organising two interactive conferences on the validity and usability of the Practical Guide to LSI.

8 Validating the Practical Guide: Interactive conferences as member check

8.1 Necessity of member check

Input for the Practical Guide came from a lot of sources and people, but the development of the guide was done by a single researcher, applying qualitative research methods. So far, the researcher is the only one who did the analysing and concluding. A member check is necessary to check the credibility of research processes and outcomes and to enhance the applicability of the Guide in practice.

In qualitative research, a member check is mostly held by sending report drafts for correction to the people who were interviewed for the research project, or by organising a meeting with a small group of key players to discuss and correct the report. Sometimes 'laymen' are involved to get more insight into the view of ordinary people, in order to enhance the usability of research outcomes. For instance, in health care research 'consensus conferences' are used (List, 2001; Nielsen et al., 2006). In a consensus conference a panel of lay people discusses the outcomes with experts until they reach consensus, registered in a consensus statement.

For several reasons a regular member check seemed inappropriate for the research project on effective use of LSI. First of all, a large number of stakeholders, practitioners, clients as well as their target groups, were involved. It seemed right to invite them to discuss and verify the success factors and effects mentioned in the guide. Are they complete, correct, relevant, and observable? Second, for future evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI it is important that the evaluation instrument is adequate and usable as a tool, and researchers also must be invited therefore. Finally, the phenomenon of an evidence based 'information leaflet' is rather new in consultancy. What is needed to make the guide work? What do potential users see as advantages or disadvantages? Involvement of a large group of clients, practitioners and researchers is necessary to discuss content as well as usability of the guide. If the motto is 'practise what you preach', why not choose Large Group Methods to involve these stakeholders in interactive conferences as member check?

Involving actors to an effective inquiry into organisational change
As Michael Beer concludes: "To break the code of successful change, three groups of actors are essential to an effective inquiry into organisational change: the managers, the academics, and the consultants." (M. Beer & Nohria, 2000, p. 435).

The concept of the Guide for discussion in the member check comprises an Executive Summary with the necessary information on when and how to use LSI, and an Expert Section with extensive facilitation and evaluation guidelines.

The goals of the conferences were:

1. To discuss the state of the art in LSI practice
2. To collectively validate the results of the research project through member check
3. To discuss the practical use of an evaluation instrument as presented in the guide.

8.2 Design and process of two interactive research conferences

The live ReSearch Conference: planning and design

The design of the live conference has been built on principles and work forms of the Large Group Methods Search Conference, Future Search, Real Time Strategic Change and Open Space Technology. The conference also has a research purpose and was thus named it 'ReSearch Conference'. Table 8-1 shows how principles of Large Group Methods were filled in with design aspects of the ReSearch conference.

Table 8-1: Design principles of the ReSearch Conference

Principles of Large Group Methods	Design aspects of the ReSearch Conference
Involve stakeholders in the planning	Preparation by a planning group of academic researchers as well as practitioners and students, seven people in total
Invite the whole system into the room	A diversity of stakeholders with an interest in LSI was personally invited: clients of an LSI, researchers of LSI or other interactive intervention approaches, practitioners of LSI
Participants do their own real time data assembling and analysis, building a commonly-shared database	Overviews are made collectively, all outcomes and conclusions are presented on large overviews on the wall; self-management of small groups; plenary reporting of small groups
Every participant is able to contribute, addressing a diversity of personal capacities	Interactive as much as possible; alternation of individual, small group and plenary work; a diversity of work forms (rational, associative and creative); no long presentations; a comfortable and inviting atmosphere, flowers on the table, beverages permanently available, good food
Looking for common ground and shared understanding	As far as possible conclusions are drawn collectively

The conference was designed by a planning group consisting of seven people. For support and recording during the conference, the planning group was expanded by two. The planning group

designed a one-day conference. The morning program focuses on current practice of LSI and the validity of the guide for evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI. The afternoon programme considered the utility and usability of the guide. For research purposes, all discussions in small groups were recorded by members of a support team, in order to capture the argumentation process. Professor Jac Geurts acted as host and facilitator of the conference, I acted as co-facilitator for the management instructions.

Live conference morning program: discussing the validity of the guide

On September 17th 2009, forty participants meet for a one-day conference in Hotel De Baak Seaside in Noordwijk in the Netherlands. The theme of the conference is 'Towards a more effective use of Large Scale Interventions'. When people enter the conference room, they see a set up that reflects the morning programme:

- A theatre part with three rows of chairs for the plenary introduction of the day
- Large posters on the wall form a big timeline to illustrate research process and outcome
- Table groups with eight chairs each for small group work
- Six large prints on the wall present copies of the tables with success factors and effects, waiting to be filled in with corrections, remarks and priorities
- Large blank paper strips on the wall, to collect individual and small group productions
- Flip-over standards to collect conclusions plenary.

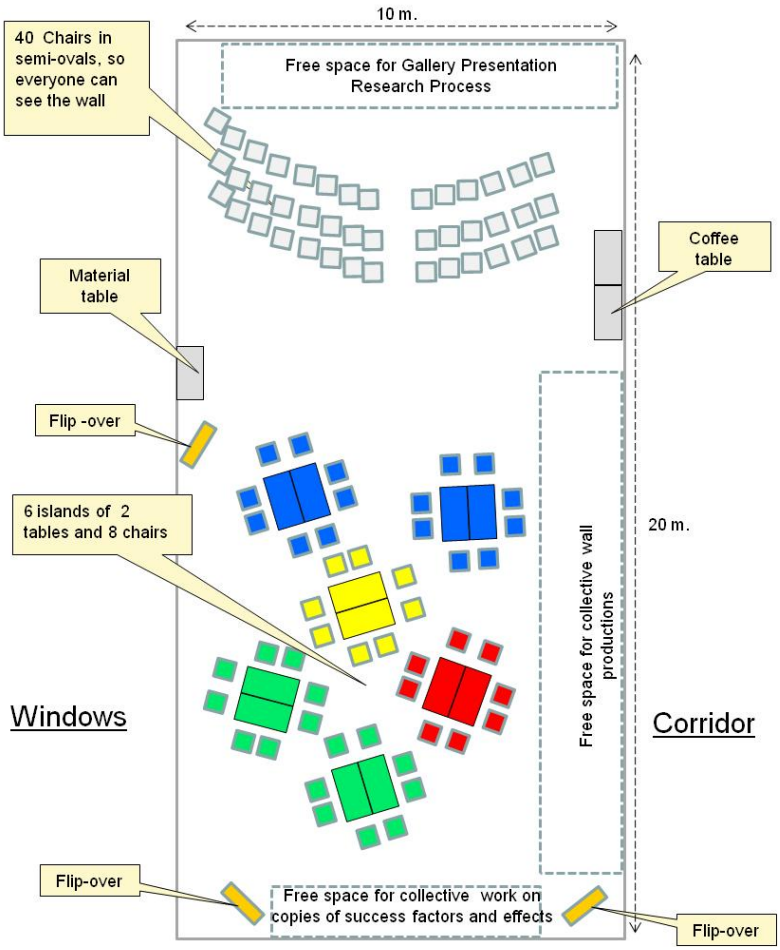


Figure 8-1: Set up of the conference room

Jac Geurts of Tilburg University opens the conference with a reflective conversation with the guests of honour Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff, founders of Future Search. They are motivators for the development of LSI worldwide. A lot of success factors and effects stem from their publications. The conference date and location have been planned to enable their participation. The opening conversation reflects on the aims of this research and of the conference in relation to the current practice of LSI. After the opening, Tonnie tells the story of 'the making of the guide', illustrated by a gallery of large wall posters presenting research steps and outcomes.

After three quarters of an hour, the first discussion round begins. Participants form mixed table groups to discuss the guide. They start by introducing themselves. I forgot to mention this in my instruction, but no problem: people feel writing is not the right way to start and they take their time for the introductions, before answering the question "Looking at the guide, what are you glad with, or not-glad with, what do you see as a dilemma?" Participants write their statements on sticky-notes individually, and then they share and discuss their results in their table group. At the

end of round one, participants post their notes on a large paper strip on the wall. The notes are categorised during coffee break. What are the remarks about? What conclusions can be drawn? Professor Geurts facilitates a plenary discussion; two members of the support team record the highlights on flip charts.

In the second round of table discussions, participants are invited to form more or less homogeneous stakeholder groups: researchers, clients, practitioners. Some people do not feel comfortable with their stakeholder label, they switch to another group.

> *"*This is the first time I am experiencing what it means to be assigned to a stakeholder group; I do not feel like a researcher, I want to be in the practitioners group.*"* (Marvin Weisbord)

In stakeholder groups, participants discuss success factors and effects. Six large wall posters present huge copies of the evaluation instrument. Each person chooses his or her most important items by placing stickers behind the items on the wall posters. They also add their corrections and remarks for the evaluation instrument. When everyone is done prioritising, a plenary discussion follows. An emerging theme in the discussion is 'demystifying LSI'. What can be mastered and scientifically evaluated, what should be left to mystery, things that cannot be grasped by science?

Live conference, afternoon programme: utility and usability of the guide

The morning programme focused on current practice of LSI and the validity of the guide for evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI. The afternoon programme is about the utility and usability of the guide. The afternoon programme is conducted using Open Space Technology. After a short reflection on the yield of the morning by facilitator Jac Geurts, I explain the rules of the game. Everyone is invited to come up with his or her topic of interest for further discussion, and to take responsibility for hosting a related discussion group.

Reflection on the state of the art with our guests of honour Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff, founders of FS

Gallery talk about the creation of the guide by Tonnie

Round 1: Discussion in mixed stakeholder table groups

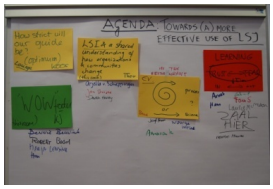
What do we see?

Round 2: Discussion in stakeholder groups

Prioritising the items of the guide

Jac Geurts introduces the afternoon programme in a setting for Open Space

What topics do you want to discuss further?



Agenda for the afternoon

Self-managed discussion groups

Bumblebees and butterflies meet outside the discussion groups

Discussion group Spiral Process of change

Plenary report of each discussion group

Report of the WoW factor group

Informal drink

Figure 8-2: Impressions of the live ReSearch conference

The next hour and a half, participants discuss the topic of their choice. Each group makes records on flip charts and prepares a report of three minutes maximum for the large group. The results are reviewed plenary discussion. The conference ends with a short closing circle, followed by an informal drink in the bar. Figure 8-2 gives an impression of the live conference.

The online conference

For the online conference on October 1st, we used OpenSpace-Online®Real time Methodology, a state-of-the-art tool for online conferencing. Each participant is able to log in to an online Open Space, from any place in the world with access to the Internet. We opted for a three-hour conference with a maximum of 30 participants. The conference runs from 15.00 until 18.00 hours Amsterdam Time (CEST).

From the live conference, we learn that a 40-page guide can be quite overwhelming. Consequently, we ask participants of the online conference to prepare for the conference by reading the Executive Summary. The central topics for the online conference are announced as:

1. *What do you think of the content of the guide? Is the information correct, complete, and adequate?*
2. *What are the possibilities for application of the guide, before, during and after an LSI?*
3. *What are the obstacles for application?*
4. *How can the guide help to enhance effective use of LSI?*

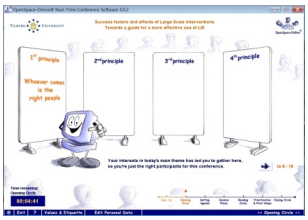
Twenty people from seven countries participate, including two founder-promoters of Large Group Intervention Methods: Harrison Owen and Barbara Bunker. Their publications have deeply influenced this research project (Owen, 1997, 2008; Bunker & Alban, 1992a, 1992b, 1997, 2005, 2006).

Process and results of the online Open Space conference

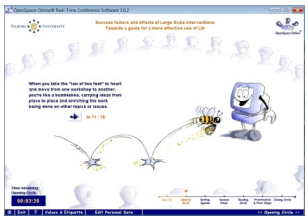
As in a live Open Space, participants set the agenda by identifying topics to work on. Comoso, our virtual facilitator, explains the rules of the game. On screen, people can see what topic is discussed in which virtual room. The 'Law of Two Feet' (meaning that you take responsibility for what you care about, standing up for that and using your own two feet to move to whatever place you can best contribute and/or learn) is applied by a single mouse click. You can see who is in a specific room, there are break out areas for free discussions or to hang around as butterfly. All discussions are done by typing in a chat box and everything is recorded integrally. On their computer screen, participants see the work area in the middle, the session rooms at the top, and the menu at the left. The conference steps and time remaining for the current step are showed at the bottom of the screen. Figure 8-3 shows a screenshot of my computer during the online conference, published with permission of OpenSpace-Online GmbH.

Figure 8-3: Screenshot of the online conference;
published with permission of OpenSpace-Online GmbH

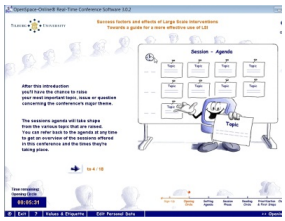
Discussion of topics is done in three rounds of 25 minutes each. In the 15-minute breaks, each convener writes the proceedings of his or her session. After a reading circle for the proceedings, topics are collectively ranked. The 'hot topics' are selected and discussed further in the next round. Immediately after the closing circle, all participants receive the automatically-generated conference report. Figure 8-4 gives an impression of the conference steps (screenshots of my computer, published with permission).



Comoso, our virtual facilitator, explains the four principles of Open Space and the Law of Two Feet

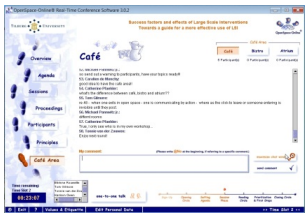


Hopping from one group to another like a bumblebee is done with one mouse click



Bringing up topics, setting the agenda

Ranking for further discussion of hot topics



There is a café area to chat with each other

Immediate digital reporting of all discussions and conclusions

Figure 8-4: Screenshots of the online conference;
published with permission from OpenSpace-Online GmbH

Typing takes time and discussion threads may intertwine. Most participants have to get used to chatting with short sentences, using abbreviations and turbo language. You are forced to concentrate on your discussion line. Some participants mention this as an intensive and tiring experience. Although it is not as good as a three-day live meeting, the online conference is generally evaluated positively: it works, a lot of work with valuable outcomes is done in only three hours, and it enables people from all over the world to meet, saving travel time and costs.

8.3 Analysing the results of the research conferences

The conferences produced a large amount of results in various forms. Since the conferences themselves were part of this research, all data had to be processed into conclusions about the validity, utility and usability of this research and on the concept of the Practical Guide. Some results were concrete in the form of remarks, discussion reports and priorities. Other results are less tangible, in the formed of new contacts, intensified relationships, experiences and changed awareness. The

conferences themselves form a worthwhile result: to have just under 60 experienced people who cared enough to show up and discuss this research was inspiring and a great acknowledgement of the research project.

The results were processed with a qualitative data analysis method as used in forming grounded theory (see Section 3.4), following the steps as shown in Figure 8-5.

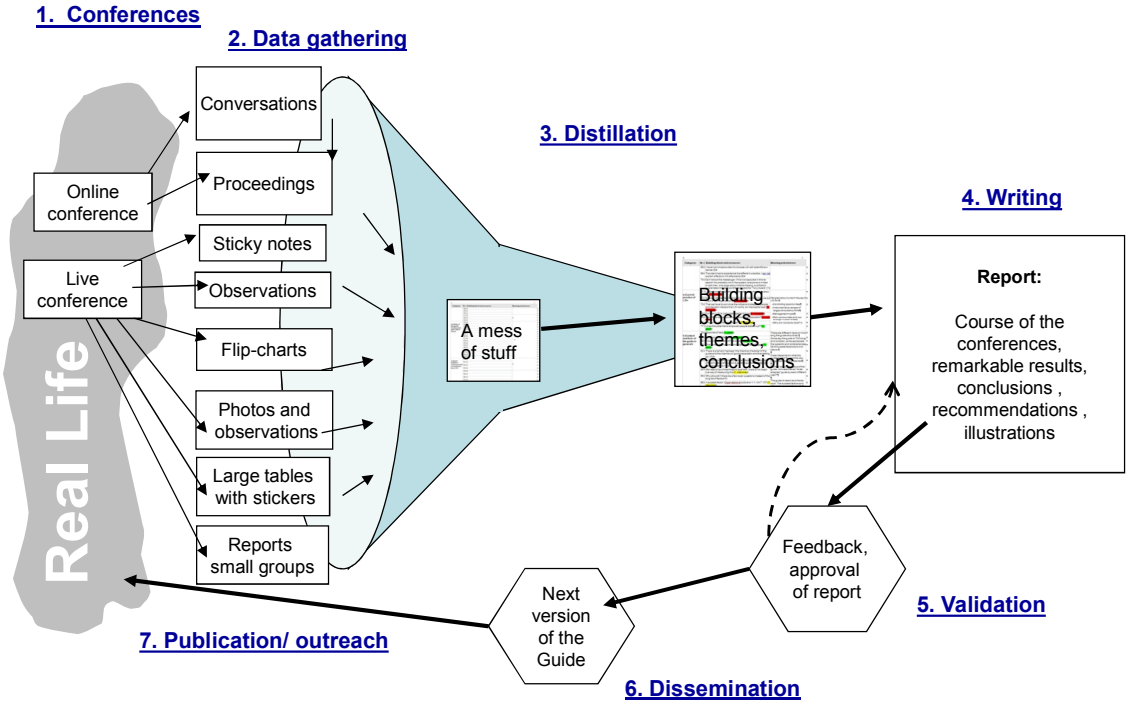
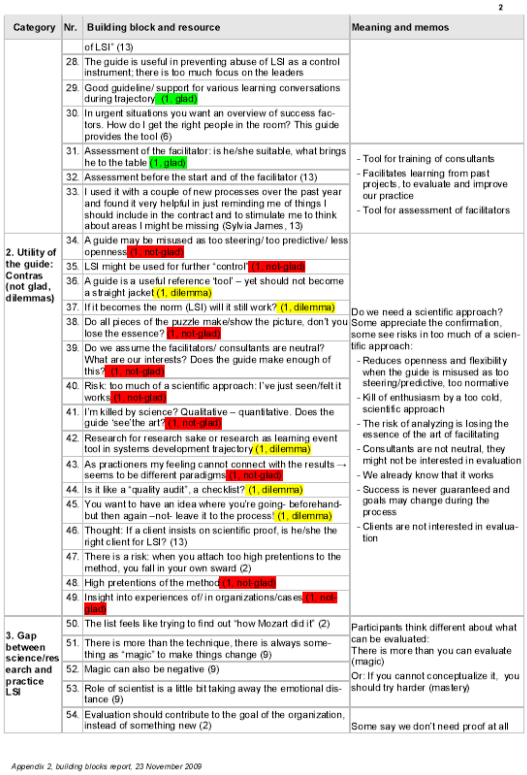


Figure 8-5: Analysing procedure; adapted from the figure "The Stages of Learning Histories" by Art Kleiner



2

Category	Nr.	Building block and resource	Meaning and memos
		of LSI" (13)	
	28.	The guide is useful in preventing abuse of LSI as a control instrument; there is too much focus on the leaders	
	29.	Good guideline/ support for various learning conversations during trajectory (1, glad)	
	30.	In urgent situations you want an overview of success factors. How do I get the right people in the room? This guide provides the tool (6)	
	31.	Assessment of the facilitator: is he/she suitable, what brings he to the table (1, glad)	- Tool for training of consultants - Facilitates learning from past projects, to evaluate and improve our practice - Tool for assessment of facilitators
	32.	Assessment before the start and of the facilitator (13)	
	33.	I used it with a couple of new processes over the past year and found it very helpful in just reminding me of things I should include in the contract and to stimulate me to think about areas I might be missing (Sylvia James, 13)	
2. Utility of the guide: Contras (not glad, dilemmas)	34.	A guide may be misused as too steering/ too predictive/ less openness (1, not-glad)	Do we need a scientific approach? Some appreciate the confirmation, some see risks in too much of a scientific approach: - Reduces openness and flexibility when the guide is misused as too steering/predictive, too normative - Kill of enthusiasm by a too cold, scientific approach - The risk of analyzing is losing the essence of the art of facilitating - Consultants are not neutral, they might not be interested in evaluation - We already know that it works - Success is never guaranteed and goals may change during the process - Clients are not interested in evaluation
	35.	LSI might be used for further "control (1, not-glad)	
	36.	A guide is a useful reference 'tool' – yet should not become a straight jacket (1, dilemma)	
	37.	If it becomes the norm (LSI) will it still work? (1, dilemma)	
	38.	Do all pieces of the puzzle make/show the picture, don't you lose the essence? (1, not-glad)	
	39.	Do we assume the facilitators/ consultants are neutral? What are our interests? Does the guide make enough of this? (1, not-glad)	
	40.	Risk: too much of a scientific approach: I've just seen/felt it works (1, not-glad)	
	41.	I'm killed by science? Qualitative – quantitative. Does the guide 'see the art'? (1, not-glad)	
	42.	Research for research sake or research as learning event tool in systems development trajectory (1, dilemma)	
	43.	As practioners my feeling cannot connect with the results → seems to be different paradigms (1, not-glad)	
	44.	Is it like a "quality audit", a checklist? (1, dilemma)	
	45.	You want to have an idea where you're going- beforehand- but then again –not- leave it to the process! (1, dilemma)	
	46.	Thought: If a client insists on scientific proof, is he/she the right client for LSI? (13)	
	47.	There is a risk: when you attach too high pretentions to the method, you fall in your own sward (2)	
	48.	High pretentions of the method (1, not-glad)	
	49.	Insight into experiences of/ in organizations/cases (1, not-glad)	
3. Gap between science/research and practice LSI	50.	The list feels like trying to find out "how Mozart did it" (2)	Participants think different about what can be evaluated: There is more than you can evaluate (magic) Or: If you cannot conceptualize it, you should try harder (mastery)
	51.	There is more than the technique, there is always something as "magic" to make things change (9)	
	52.	Magic can also be negative (9)	
	53.	Role of scientist is a little bit taking away the emotional distance (9)	
	54.	Evaluation should contribute to the goal of the organization, instead of something new (2)	Some say we don't need proof at all

Appendix 2, building blocks report, 23 November 2009

Figure 8-6: Page 2 of 19 of the Building Blocks for the member check conclusions

The analyses produced 423 building blocks, spread over 24 categories. The process of distillation leads to conclusions and recommendations, detailed corrections and additions for the guide and the list of success factors and effects. The suggested corrections and additions were integrated into the current version of the Practical Guide to LSI, presented in Part 3 of this book.

8.4 The evaluation instrument: Is it correct, adequate and usable?

How the evaluation instrument can be used to improve own consultancy practice
"I used it with a couple of new processes over the past year and found it very helpful in just reminding me of things I should include in the contract and to stimulate me to think about areas I might be missing." (Sylvia James, participant in the online conference)

This Section summarises the main themes and conclusions which emerged from further convergence of the categories. The main themes and conclusions were:

- The role of the leaders and expectation management by consultants were seen as the most important success factors
- There is a paradox in sustainable change and planned follow-up: sustainable change is an oxymoron, a figure of speech that combines normally contradictory terms. You try to create a transformation, to create a system you believe in, while at the same time you have to iterate that interaction in each present as repetition or habit.
- There is no consensus about planning of follow-up beforehand and the role of the consultant in the follow-up; advocates of planning follow-up state that the whole LSI and the follow-up should be embedded in a continuous development vision; opponents state that the LSI *is* the change, a turning point; if people are empowered they will take responsibility and organise the follow-up themselves
- We have to live and work with a paradoxical causality. In LSI, working participatively is both a condition and a result. There is a paradox in the conditions you need for LSI (enough trust to show up and communicate with each other), the complex situations LSI is indicated for (inherent conflicts and different interests) and the intended effects (more trust and better communication)
- This paradoxical causality does not match linear academic research traditions and linear measuring of cause-effect relations

Do we need a scientific approach? Some say No, we already know that it works, others say Yes, it offers a framework for evaluation and conversations during the trajectory (also see the

- Table 16-1 Pros and Cons of an evidence based guide in Section 16.1)
- Evaluation should be done with more than one person. Who should perform the evaluation of an LSI and how depends on the goal of the evaluation; evaluation should be discussed beforehand and built into the contract
- The guide is a tool for making explicit what a good facilitator does implicitly, thus helping those who are less familiar with LSI in facilitating. It can also be used in other scientific fields.
- How extensive should the guide be? The guide is meant as a framework, to be filled in when using specific methods and for specific situations. How long the guide should be depends on what it is used for.
- For embedding of the guide, different forms and types (look and feel) for different purposes and user groups were recommended. Suggestion: offer the guide as 'open source' on the web, so everyone can contribute with stories of How To guidelines, tools, best and bad practices, etcetera.

Measuring is a linear process that does not fit the spiral/circular change process. There is a conflict between assessing and predicting effects and 'no guarantee'; the guide should be clear about pretentions of evaluation process and outcome. The main conclusions on the success factors and how they can be measured are:

1. Be clear about what is being measured and the pretentions of measurements: the effectiveness is not only about reaching goals; goals may change along the way, it is what stakeholders perceive as 'worth the effort' and as 'ongoing change process'

2. Not everything a facilitator does is visible; presence is important
3. There is no guarantee of success. Expectation management and discussing goals need ongoing attention during the process; you have to do the best you can and then let go, trusting the process
4. The consultant has a role in coaching the client to maintain shared power. A good client-business-facilitator match is a success factor
5. There were different opinions about time and effort needed for preparation, and as a consequence, the role of the planning team:
    - Some state: focus on preparation, for any event
    - Others state: leave it to self-organisation as much as possible. When an issue is painfully clear and people who care are there, everything takes care of itself.
6. Who are the right people? The LGI methods show different ideas about who should be invited and the invitation procedure, but in the end participants choose what group they want to identify with. Some imply extensive stakeholder analysis, some invite everyone who cares and wants to take responsibility.
7. Caring, responsibility, diversity and self-organisation were seen as major working elements
8. Dilemma: we need people from outside, but clients are often scared to involve them
9. Desired improvements of the evaluation instrument:
    - Evaluate more LSIs for embedding of the guide
    - Evaluation should be done with more than one person. Who should perform the evaluation of an LSI and how depends on the goal of the evaluation.
    - If you want to the whole system to 'get smart', you have to involve the whole system in learning from the LSI, for follow-up. Different judgments may come up.
    - Evaluation should be discussed beforehand and built into the contract.
10. Dilemmas in measuring the effectiveness:
    - Success always has more fathers; effects should always be described in terms of "The LSI contributed to ……"

What should be in the Guide? Conclusions of the Research Conferences are:

- Be clear about the status of the guide: is it meant as a 'to be adapted' guide by each different user? The guide is meant as a framework. The success factors and effects have to be filled in:
- The effectiveness depends on goals and criteria for success.
- People may have different views on success
- Goals might develop during the process, but you do not have to define the desired outcomes in advance to be able to evaluate the effectiveness
- Be clear that no LSI is perfect, no LSI will meet all criteria; there are always sub-optimal conditions, performance, means etc.

- There are different views on how long the guide should be. It also depends on what the guide is used for, and the way the guidelines are presented. Arguments for a long and rich guide were:
  - There is a need for rich information, because an information leaflet should educate the client, offering information to help make good decisions and to reflect on their bigger questions
  - It is a very systematic and comprehensive list of success factors and indicators, covering all aspects of the intervention as well as facilitators and stakeholders

  Arguments for a short and simple guide:
  - It is far too long and complex now, why not just a few open questions or a list of dilemmas to discuss?
- Add a FAQ section to the guide.

The use of Large Group Interventions as member check in intervention research will be further discussed in Section 15.3. In the next Part, the harvest of the research journey, concerning when and how LSI is effective for sustainable change is presented, namely a Practical Guide for the effective use of LSI.

Tangible results for the conferences were:
- Sticky-notes of round 1 of the live conference, showing how participants felt about the current guide; 50 'glads', 59 'not-glads' and 59 'dilemmas'
- 5 reports of table discussions in round 1
- Flip-charts with conclusions of round 1 (What are we glad or not-glad with, what are dilemmas)
- 5 reports of table discussions in round 2 (What are the most important items)
- 6 large posters with stickers to mark priorities for success factors and effects, and with notes for corrections and additions
- Flip-charts with reports of the open space discussion groups
- 5 reports with recordings of group discussions in open space
- About 350 photos of the live conference, of which 110 photos were selected for the web albums
- Notes with personal remarks of participants
- Session comments of the OpenSpace-Online
- Proceedings of the online sessions
- Working on hot topics report
- Comments in break-out areas
- Screenshots

Part 3: An evidence based practical guide to LSI

Introduction to Part 3

Part 3 presents the results of the research on the effectiveness of LSI. All results have been wrapped up in the form of an evidence based practical guide for the effective use of LSI. Compared to the other Parts of this book, the writing style has a more direct tone of voice. You are addressed as a (potential) user of LSI, looking for guidelines on "When and how to use LSI effectively". The Guide, comprising the Chapters 9-13, is written in such a way that it can be read separately. However, for efficiency reasons, the References and Appendix have not been repeated in this separate guide. You will find them at the end of the book. Section 9.4 provides the essential information in abbreviated form for Clients, and is to be considered as the precursor of a standalone Client Information Leaflet (CIL) for LSI, comparable to Patient Information Leaflets (PILs) in health care. For the sake of the line of reasoning in the research process of building the Guide, Chapter 4 "What is LSI?" has not been included in the Guide in Part 3. For a more extensive description of the history, principles and characteristics than that provided in the CIL of Section 9.4, please see Chapter 4.

In the Chapters 11, 12, and 13, the research question "When and how is LSI effective for sustainable change" will be answered, by providing observable measures of the effectiveness. These measures have been organised following the categories of the research model described in Section 3.7. The categories Context/Task, Client and Consultant provide the success factors of the preconditions before the start of an LSI (Chapter 11). The category Intervention comprises the factors for design and management during the LSI (Chapter 12). The category Effectiveness presents observable effects, divided into the levels non-sustainable and sustainable effects, with methods and tools for evaluation of the effectiveness after an LSI (Chapter 13).

In Part 3, the results and conclusions on the effectiveness of LSI have been presented as detailed guidelines, illustrated with the findings from the exploration of LSI practice as described in Part 2. Chapter 10 starts with the stories of three test cases, evaluated two years after the fact (see case study described in Chapter 7). These stories serve as a thread for the illustrations of guidelines. Two of them elaborate on the Sneak Preview of Chapter 1. What happened? Why is the one LSI more effective than the other? In Chapter 14 of Part 4, the conclusions will be reviewed from theoretical and practical perspectives on organisational change, in order to gain insight into why LSI is effective for sustainable change as concluded.

9 How to use this Guide

9.1 Introduction to the Guide

"This guide makes explicit what experienced facilitators do implicitly" (participant ReSearch conference)

Predicting an organisation's readiness for participative change and identifying conditions for success are important steps for effective and sustainable change in the whole system. However, this is easier said than done. There is a lot of talk about how you measure the outcomes of the interactive interventions and why there is so little academic research done. Most publications focus on the large group conference and specific Large Group Methods. The distinguishing of an LSI as the bigger change process, with the whole-system-in-the-room events as essential parts, tries to go beyond the discussion about Large Group Methods. As Marvin Weisbord says (personal conversation 2008): "*They all work, it is about the skill in using them right in the right place and at the right time*". Although there appears to be great variation on how the characteristics of an LSI are filled in, the same basic principles can be recognised: focus on the whole system, active participation of stakeholders at all stages of the change process, self-management and addressing a variety of qualities and learning styles of human beings. The guide offers a flexible framework, a meta-set of criteria and indicators, to be filled in more specifically for each type of LSI. As shown in the previous chapters, the Practical Guide has been provided by empirical and theoretical research. A group of potential users - practitioners, researchers and clients of LSI - has been involved in testing and improving this Guide. This Guide has been developed to help you easily access all of the information you need. It offers detailed guidelines on assessment and managing of a system's change and features an evaluation instrument which provides a step-by-step approach to assessment and evaluation of the process.

9.2 Structure and content

The guide has been structured as follows:

- Client Information Leaflet (Section 9.4)
- Guidelines for assessment of preconditions, defined by success factors of task, client and consultant(s) (Chapter 11)
- Guidelines for assessment of performance during the LSI with success factors of design and facilitation (Chapter 12)
- Evaluation of the effectiveness afterwards, offering an evaluation instrument with procedures, tools and examples of application (Chapter 13).

The guidelines of Chapter 11-13 are intertwined with stories from practice, as illustrations of success factors and their indicators. They were derived from three test cases. The stories of these

cases are given in Chapter 10. The success factors have to be filled in for specific LGI methods. Appendix 1 gives the design requirements for the five most widely used LGI methods: Future Search, Real Time Strategic Change/Whole Scale Change TM, Open Space Technology and World Café.

9.3 The three functions of the Guide

The guidelines in this Part are meant to enhance the effective use of LSI by professionals in three stages:

1. Before the start: to assess the preconditions
2. During the LSI: as guidelines for design and management
3. Afterwards: to evaluate the effectiveness of the LSI.

Figure 9-1 shows the steps of assessment, design and management, and evaluation. Each numbered step in this process has been reviewed in the next chapters and expanded upon in the tools of the Appendices.

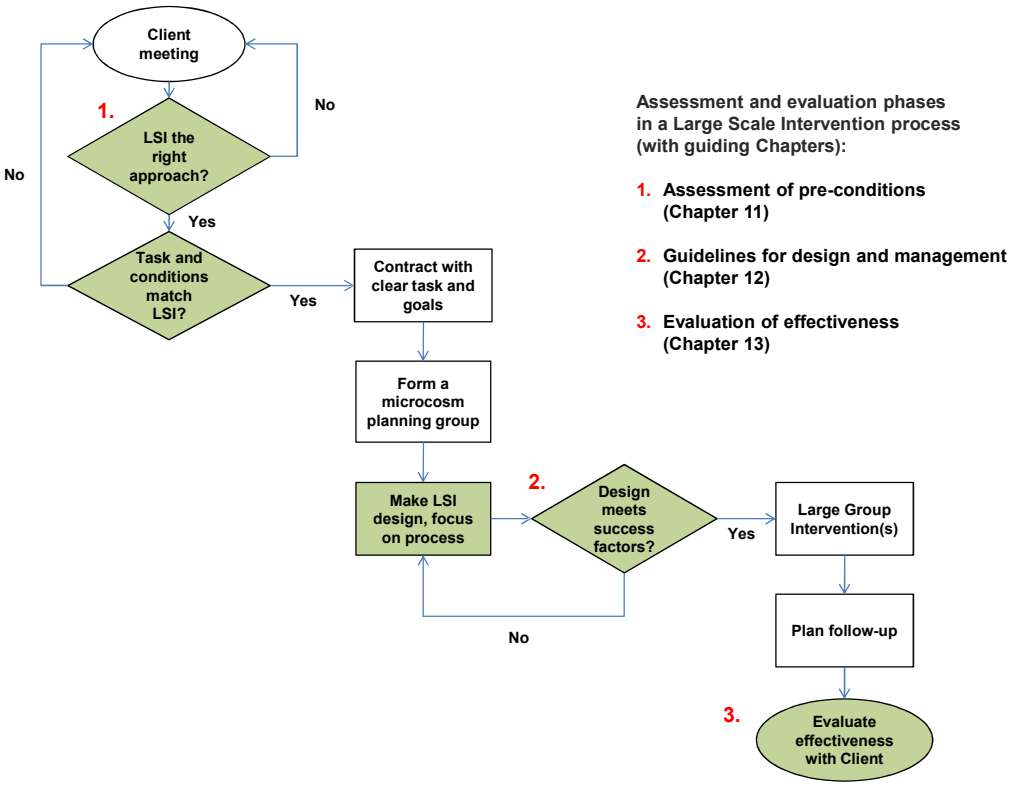


Figure 9-1: Assessment and evaluation stages in the LSI process

9.4 A Client Information Leaflet for LSI

This Section offers a Client Information Leaflet. The format has been derived from information leaflets and practical guides for medical treatments, especially from "The Practical Guide: Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults".[2] This leaflet is based on academic research, using an evidence based methodology to develop key recommendations and tools. It is intended to be used when introducing LSI to potential users, namely, executives and managers.

What is LSI and what is it used for?

Large Scale Interventions (LSI) form an approach for sustainable change with the whole system (organisation or community and its stakeholders). It is used to address compelling tasks in complex situations. LSI is used:

- For a faster and better implementation of change in the whole system
- To establish a feeling of ownership and stimulate self-management
- To enhance the capacity for change and learning in order to sustain change on the longer term.

Although we should be cautious when promising to help solve complex collective problems, LSI can give direction to meta problems, a result that can hardly be attained otherwise. A well-performed LSI produces 'essentially by-products' (the ones you want but cannot enforce) as increase of trust, awareness, engagement and responsibility of participants.

Definition of LSI

Large Scale Interventions are also known under synonyms such as Whole Systems Change, Whole System Working and Large Scale Change. For this guide the name Large Scale Interventions has been used, with this definition:

> *A Large Scale Intervention (LSI) is a trajectory for change or learning in which stakeholders of the whole system (organisation or community and its context) are invited to contribute at all stages of the trajectory. On one or more occasions, the whole system is invited into one room, to address strategic issues.*

[2] This Guide was developed cooperatively by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity (NAASO) and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). It is based on the Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults: Evidence Report developed by the NHLBI Expert Panel and released in June 1998. The Expert Panel used an evidence based methodology to develop key recommendations for assessing and treating overweight and obese patients. The goal of the Practical Guide is to provide the tools professionals need to effectively manage their overweight and obese adult patients.

In this definition the interventions with (a representation of) the whole system in the room, the large group conferences or LGIs, are embedded in a bigger change process, the LSI trajectory.

What does LSI do?

LSI provides methods for balancing top-down and bottom-up decision-making. LSI comprises a trajectory with stakeholders contributing to the change process at all stages. On one or more occasions (a substantial representation of) the whole system is invited into one room, to work on strategic issues. The scale addresses the possibly large numbers of people involved. Large scale also refers to viewing change processes in the connection to their larger context. To be able to work productively with a large group (15 to more than 1000 participants) in the room a whole family of methods has been developed, the Large Group Intervention (LGI) methods. The best known LGI methods are Future Search, Search Conference, Open Space, World Café and Real Time Strategic Change (Whole Scale Change™).

The basic working principles of the LSI approach are:

- ❑ Systems thinking: dynamics in time and context influence the future of the system
- ❑ Participation of stakeholders: active participation enhances commitment to change, learning and working together
- ❑ Action learning: facilitates real time change because thinking and doing are not separated; the people who have to do the job are involved in planning
- ❑ Sensemaking: looking for common ground by sharing views and experiences; sustainable experience is created by engaging the whole person (head, heart and hands), because reality is defined by meanings as well as facts; the basic assumption is that everything that lives wants to grow and flourish.

Before using LSI: assessment of preconditions

An LSI is a complex and high-risk intervention. It requires skilled facilitators and a client who supports the principles of LSI. Although success can never be guaranteed in complex situations, one can enhance the chance of success by assessing if preconditions are right by answering the next questions:

1. **Is LSI the right approach? Success factors:**
   - ❑ The task is important
   - ❑ Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task
   - ❑ Complex, urgent, or uncertain situation.
2. **Are leaders willing to support LSI? Success factors:**
   - ❑ Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power

- ❑ Leaders are willing to spend time and money to do it 'by the book'
- ❑ Political climate has enough trust to start.

3. **Are the consultants skilled to conduct an LSI? Success factors:**
   - ❑ Consultants make a clear contract with the client
   - ❑ Consultants manage expectations
   - ❑ Consultants are skilled to work with large groups
   - ❑ Consultants believe in the principles of LSI.

When not to use LSI

Do not use LSI if:

- ❑ the issue is not really important to anyone
- ❑ the task is abstract and likely to lead to talk without action
- ❑ individual professionals can solve the problem
- ❑ one-way information transfer is required
- ❑ there is no opportunity for change, due to lack of resources, energy, time, or lack of actual influence
- ❑ the political situation is highly charged and basic willingness to collaborate is absent
- ❑ an important stakeholder group cannot or will not participate.

How to use LSI

Success factors for the effective design and performance of an LSI are:

- ❑ The Large Group Intervention (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort
- ❑ Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics
- ❑ Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions
- ❑ Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI
- ❑ Representation: consideration for those who are not present; contact is supported by the larger social system
- ❑ LGI enables everyone's contributions by inclusiveness and the building trust
- ❑ Divergence of perspectives: explore the whole before fixing any parts, engaging new connections, building a common database of the system
- ❑ Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management

- ❑ Convergence of perspectives: tapping into collective intelligence, looking for common ground
- ❑ Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process; it symbolizes the principles of LSI
- ❑ Action planning is done in the LGI, or soon after
- ❑ Reflection on conditions and principles with participants in the LGI, in everyday language
- ❑ Building of capacity to work participatively during the LSI
- ❑ LGI is managed well by facilitators
- ❑ Building of a post-event support structure: during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated.

Reported effects

Short-term effects (the LSI contributes to getting more and better work done) are:

- ❑ Short-term objectives are met
- ❑ Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context
- ❑ Commitment and energy for change, better implementation
- ❑ New relationships, more potential for innovation
- ❑ Some elements of LSI are transferred
- ❑ Efficiency is increased.

Sustainable effects (the LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning) are:

- ❑ Collective learning and changing continue, increased capacity for change
- ❑ Increased reflective self-awareness
- ❑ More permeable boundaries: opening up the organisation, inviting diversity; focus on how good the system is; more systemic thinking
- ❑ New structures sustain ongoing participation in change
- ❑ Communication is more direct and constructive.

Reported risks

Like all interventions, LSI can cause undesired effects, especially if not performed well. Reported risks are:

- ❑ Cynicism and greater resistance to change
- ❑ Loss of trust in participative processes
- ❑ Apathy, people awaiting further action by leaders to get relief of responsibility
- ❑ Frustration about lack of time or resources for follow-up
- ❑ Only relatively minor, non-controversial actions are done
- ❑ Discouragement among people who were not invited
- ❑ Increased power game, increased distrust, decline of open communication
- ❑ Collusive climate, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate.

Top 11 pitfalls to avoid

Pitfalls to avoid when working with LSI are:

1. As a leader, I already know what stakeholders think and want; you do not need to involve them in a change process
2. As a leader, I know what is best, a top-down approach saves time and money.
3. A one-time event should do it; focus on the large group event and do not work on engagement and embedding after the event
4. Make the intervention small scale: a short large group conference, no external stakeholders, a narrow defined task; a one-day event should be enough to organise change
5. Raise high expectations and promise more than possible with the available time and resources
6. Do not work with a microcosm planning group, leave it to the project manager and consultants
7. Take an expert role as a consultant: tell them what to do and work in meetings on the attitude of the group
8. Invite or even force participants to work on a task that is not really important for them; a participative meeting is always a good thing
9. As a consultant, do not work on leadership alignment, you already know what the ideas and intentions of (top)managers are; they will follow the plans of the participants automatically

10. As a consultant, never say NO if a client wants an LSI, even if conditions are not right for an LSI; you never know what will happen, conditions can change, and commercial interests also count
11. As a leader, hire facilitators only for the Large Group Intervention, do not involve facilitators in design and management of the bigger process.

Overview of success factors and effects of LSI, and further information

Figure 9-2 gives an overview of the success factors and effects of LSI. In the following Chapters 10 and 12, the success factors and effects will be further discussed and illustrated with examples from practice. Chapter 13 provides the procedure and steps for conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness of an LSI. The post-evaluation of three test cases will serve as examples. For more information on “What is LSI and what is it used for” see Chapter 4. If you are interested in the research process that produced the evidence this Guide is based on (see Chapters 6-8).

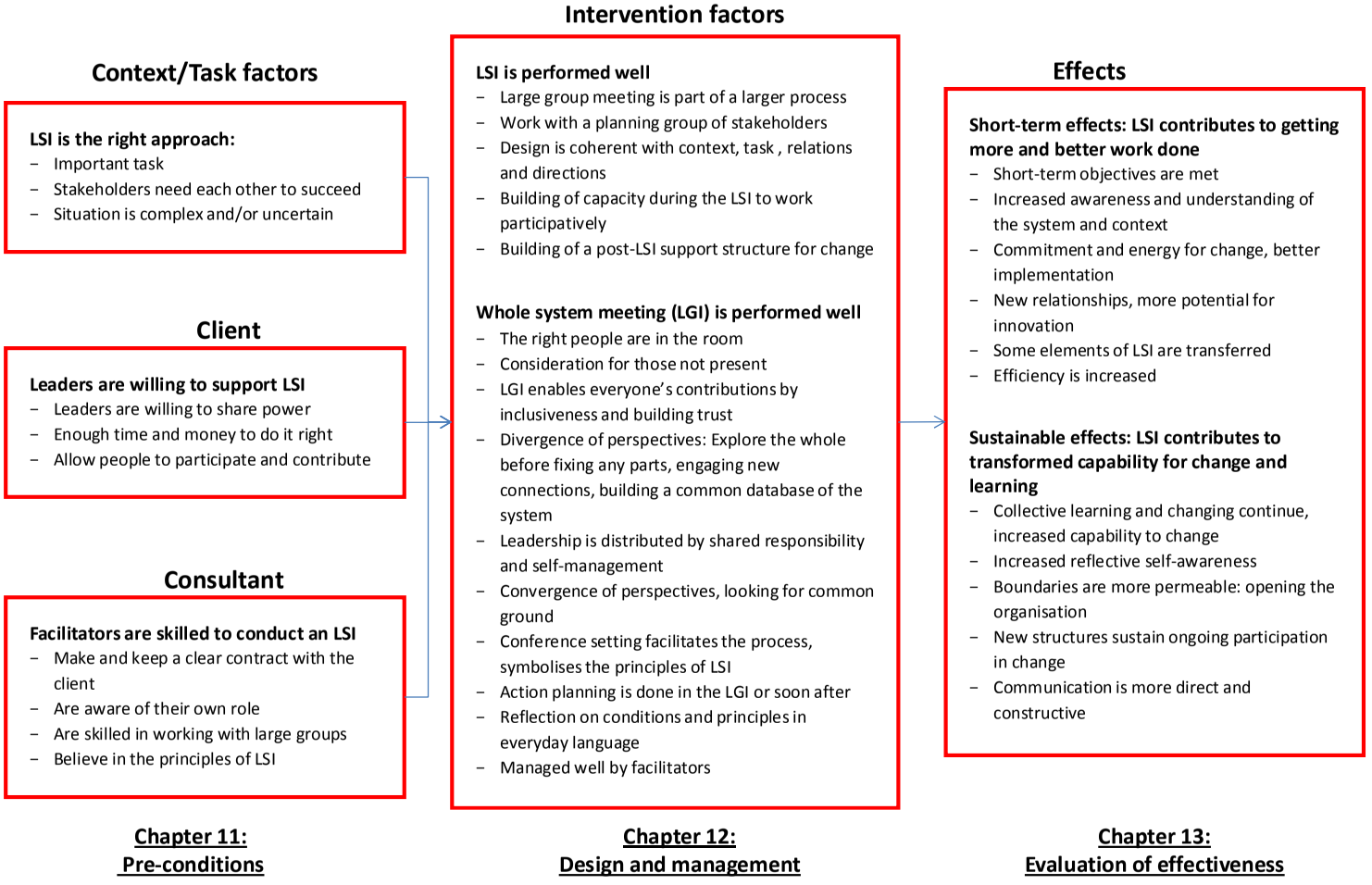


Figure 9-2: Overview of success factors and effects of LSI

10 The stories of the three test cases

10.1 Case 1: How can our schools become the best? (Parent Case)

An LSI with a Parent Café to envision a desirable future

Context

In 2006, the Board of an organisation with 24 public primary schools in one city has formulated an ambitious goal: within ten years, they want to become the organisation with the best schools in the South of the Netherlands. The organisation has around 600 employees, serving 6500 pupils and 12000 parents. As input for their longer-term policy, they want to know what their clients (represented by parents) think the best schools look like. A planning group is formed, consisting of two Board members, Frank and Jan, central staff director Eric, and educational specialist Marian.

Contract with the consultants and planning

The planning group invites Ronald, owner of a bureau specialising in school marketing, to talk things over. Ronald had already conducted satisfaction surveys for their schools.

> Jan (Board member, parent and senior consultant, evaluation interview April 2009): "At first, we wanted an investigation with surveys. Then Ronald joined us, and we found out that standardised surveys are not very useful for our purpose. Low response, not representative, no useful new input."

Ronald suggests an interactive approach with LSI in order to engage parents. He asks Tonnie as sub-contractor, to help design and facilitate the process (Ronald and Tonnie are already working together on the project of Case 2).

The planning group spends a lot of time together. What is the goal exactly for this project? Whom do we need to reach that goal? In a group meeting, the members make a timeline together. On a large white board they review past, present and future crucial moments and developments. Since it is hard for the members of the planning group to imagine what a large group conference may look like, Tonnie writes three scenarios, one page each, in the form of a 'live' report. The group uses elements from all three scenarios to design an end-of-the-day Parent Café. Stakeholder groups are parents, school directors, teachers, central staff, and the Board. The invitation strategy is consciously prepared. Every school director personally invites a group of parents he or she considers a cross-section of the school population. A crucial moment comes when Frank tells that the other six Board members are sceptic about the approach. They hesitate about coming and will only come as observers. Ronald made a loud and clear statement: if they do not come and participate, we will quit. It would contradict the message you want to give to parents. The next week, Frank and Jan explain this to the Board members. They agree to participate.

The conference

At half-past four, on a warm afternoon in May 2007, a highly diverse group of 160 participants gathers in the basement of a motel. The room is set up as a large café. Behind a long blank wall, part of the room is prepared for diner. On a screen, a welcome slide with the café theme is projected. Eric introduces the programme briefly. The facilitators explain the way of working and invite participants to discuss the questions 'What makes a good school? What is most important for you?'. People travel tables in three short rounds. Everyone individually writes criteria on sticky-notes, then they discuss them with others, and post the most important ones on a 12-meter long paper strip on the wall. Conclusions are collected plenary. One parent makes an impassioned plea for more sport at school, leaving a deep impression (two years later every interviewee recalls this moment). After a good buffet dinner, Tonnie invites everyone to envision the desired future in 2011. Table groups are formed, based on the type of school they prefer. In one hour, every group produces a poster reflecting their vision. They enjoy the creative process; there is much laughter. Eric facilitates a gallery walk with a plenary presentation of the 21 posters, some of them with complete educational concepts. Just after half past nine, Eric closes the conference and invites participants for a drink to celebrate. When leaving, participants post a card with tips from the future for the Board.

> Frans (school director, evaluation interview May 2009): "I noticed parents started to exchange experiences. 'In our school we have this, how is that in yours', or 'how would we want it to be for both of us'. That is how you could notice the atmosphere was different. Normally it is more like a competition. People were interested in each other. This is caused by the setting and the attitude of the facilitators and Eric. Everything expressed 'what we do here is important, it is about us and the future of our schools'."

Reporting and follow-up

The conference is a great success, also for the Board. It was expensive, but worth the effort. In June, all participants have been informed by email about follow-up actions. Ronald conducts an internet panel inquiry in August. Lack of time delays reporting of the conference outcome. In September, Tonnie is asked to analyse the outcomes of the conference and the internet panel and make a report with recommendations for the Board. The Board finds the ideas of parents important, however not very new or distinctive for their policy.

> Maurits (parent, senior consultant, evaluation interview May 2009): "As a member of the GMR (the central participation council) and as a parent, I think the follow-up was far too little. The internet panel was held only once, I have never seen the report with recommendations, and it was certainly not discussed in the GMR. The Board proclaims the values participation and openness, but the formulation of the longer-term policy stayed behind closed doors for two years. Not even Eric was invited. Consultants have to pay more attention to capacity building with Board, management and employees, to create awareness of what self-management and participation implies."

Effects of the LSI after two years

The bad appearance of some school buildings was a hot item for parents. Extra investments are made to accommodate this issue and to show parents their input is taken seriously. The relation with parents is improved, more interactive and constructive. There was an Open Space with parents to start a 'Talent campus', namely schools with a specific developmental focus, such as bilingual education, sports, highly gifted learners. Frans invited Tonnie to facilitate an interactive day based on LSI principles with his team. The GMR is going to start interactive cafes with central staff, directors, parents, and Board members.

> Eric (evaluation interview June 2009): "What I learned from this project is how important it is to take your clients seriously. That is not in our system in the education sector, perhaps on the level of individual schools, but not as an organisation. I learned a good preparation is important, doing some scenario thinking, to know what your strength is, what you can influence yourself, and what you need others for."

10.2 Case 2: How do we make our schools more attractive? (School Director Case)

An Open Space as kick-off for profiling public primary schools

Context

A school Board for primary education in the Netherlands is confronted with a disproportionate drop in the number of pupils over the last years. In 2006, the organisation is still part of the municipality. Public schools in the Netherlands are accessible to everyone, they have no specific religious denomination. The public schools in the city are dealing with a negative image: many children from lower income families, too many foreigners, lower quality of education. The organisation consists of 55 schools on 70 locations spread all over town. With around 13000 children, they are among the largest organisations for primary education in the Netherlands. The organisation is in the middle of a process of privatisation. Funding is related to pupil numbers. Wiely, general director, speaks of a Titanic situation. He decides to start a process so as to realise a more result-oriented culture. The keywords in this process are collective ambition and commitment.

> Wiely (evaluation interview May 2009): "Back then, school directors were generally not aware of the problem, while we were losing more pupils than other schools in the same neighbourhoods. Commitment to the subject was low. Good education has always been their first concern, not the number of pupils or collective profiling. Moreover, it is a painful subject to discuss with colleagues when your school is doing poorly."

Contract with the consultants

Wiely and Désirée, part-time staff member and communication consultant from an educational service, are thinking of a marketing training for all directors. In November 2006, they have their first meeting with Ronald, owner of a bureau specialised in school marketing. Ronald realises that

collective awareness and attitude are as important as professional PR, and that probably training will not be enough. Ronald has recently received LSI training from Tonnie, and he suggests an interactive process with all directors to enhance awareness of a collective problem. He hires Tonnie as sub-contractor to facilitate this start. Tonnie proposes a project with a large group conference to start with, followed by supported action groups and a second conference a few months later to exchange experiences and workshops for relevant subjects.

Change process

The first conference should result in a shared feeling of urgency, collective ambition and commitment to turn the tide, and some practical follow-up actions to improve the situation of individual schools. Open Space seems a good format for this conference. School directors are often overloaded with work, it is not easy to get them all together on one day. The task is urgent, so Wiely decides to hold the conference on a day scheduled for a directors' meeting, a full day on 1 February 2007. Preparation time is short. Désirée and three consultants form the project group to design the project. A planning group consisting of the project group expanded with the general director and four school directors, from different situations and opinions, meets for the first time on 21 December 2006, to discuss the design and the programme of the first conference. The atmosphere is tense and a bit negative. Why not just provide training? Is this lack of control going to work? Tonnie has a hard time explaining the principles in everyday language. Because of the sensitive subject, the planning group decides to invite only directors, assistant-directors and central staff for the conference, no teachers or parents.

The Open Space conference

The conference is in the communication museum in the city centre and the conference room is long and narrow. Murphy's Law is at work: project leader Désirée is unable to come, General Executive Wiely is delayed. After reception with coffee, about 70 directors take a seat in a wide oval of chairs. Ronald starts with a visualisation of twenty minutes, a story of the experiences of parents when visiting one of the schools. Then Wiely explains the goals for the day and for the bigger change process, including personal targets for acquisition of pupils. After one hour, Tonnie introduces Open Space. The central theme is: "How do we make our schools more attractive?" The Energy level is low. In the first few minutes, no one enters the circle to announce a subject for a subgroup. Finally, eleven groups form for the first round in sub-groups and seven for the second round. Wiely is enthusiastic about the process: they are really taking responsibility for subgroups and some groups are having lively discussions. Each group produces a report in the news centre, here ten laptops are provided. The reports are copied in a nearby copy centre. During lunch, information about school marketing and support options is displayed. Ronald and his colleague Luc are available to answer questions. Participants read the reports. The afternoon programme starts with a plenary discussion, then participants place stickers on flip charts to select the most important items. A third round for action planning is on the agenda, but energy is dropping fast. At three o'clock pm Wiely and Tonnie decide to skip the third round and start with the conference evaluation in the closing circle of Open Space. Some participants are positive about the exchange

of experiences and the opportunity for everyone who wanted to contribute to do so, although some pass the microphone with a look of scepticism. Every participant receives a binder with the reports and information about school marketing.

Follow-up

The next week the planning group meets for the third and last time. The evaluation is positive in general, although the programme could have been shorter and the beginning more energetic. The twelve items with the most stickers are selected for follow-up actions. Désirée, Ronald and Luc continue with providing a help desk, with projects for specific groups of schools, investigations and support for individual schools. The second conference is called off.

Effects after two years

The whole project was a success. A negative trend of ten years was turned into a positive one. The image of schools is improving. Privatization was realised in January 2008. Coordinator Wim has become Central Marketing Executive. Wiely, General Executive of the new organisation, thinks the LSI was worth the effort; it raised awareness of the urgency and collective responsibility for the issue. Among directors and consultants, perceptions of causes and effects differed strongly. It worked, but could it have not been done much better? There has not been another LSI so far.

> Wout (school director, evaluation interview May 2009): "What I remember is that everyone was satisfied with the conference, but it was only a start. I know there were people walking around with the attitude of 'why this, what's the use, leave it to the Board …', instead of 'let's do this together'. That was made up for in the following process, also due to the targets we agreed upon. We are integral manager now with five policy areas, acquisition is one of them. We engage parents more in everything we do, they are our greatest ambassadors. My school (92% foreigners from 40 different nationalities) had a bad name. That is changing and we get more pupils."

10.3 Case 3: More power for development and innovation of libraries (Library Case)

An LSI as part of an innovation process in public libraries

Context

The project starts in the summer of 2006. The organisation consists of 12 local libraries, with about 85 employees, many of whom are women with a part-time job. Developments in communication and information technology are causing turbulence in the library sector. The organisation is the result of the merger and privatization of libraries of eight local governments in two neighbouring rural regions in the South of the Netherlands. The reorganisation in 2004 was radical (after five years people still call it a traumatic experience that left deep scars). Everyone got a new workplace and connections to the local community disappeared. New 'knowledge teams' form an intermediary layer between centralised and de-centralised management. This new layer causes problems in

alignment for managers and makes division of tasks unclear for employees. In 2006, following several interim managers, a new and young director Thijs comes in. Thijs, a former consultant, starts with an analysis of the problems. He defines three trajectories for organisational development: one to improve the financial process, one for product innovation and one for an internal reorganisation. The LSI concerns *Track 3*, titled 'More developmental weight in 2008'.

Contract with the consultant

The goal of Track 3 is threefold: first to remove the intermediary level with the knowledge teams, second to create support for new ways of working, and third to improve the quality of decisions. Time pressure is high, due to required governmental approval for funding for the next years. Thijs invites several consultancy bureaus. He is thinking of restructuring the organisation with a top-down approach, based on external analyses and advice. He selects Marja, because she focuses on the goals, not on the problems. She proposes a more participative approach and a broader view of the situation. Marja is an experienced change consultant. She has recently followed a training in the facilitation of LSIs, given by her companion Tonnie. The contract with an explanation of the LSI approach is signed, and a project group, consisting of a cross-section of the organisation, starts in September 2006. In December 2006, the advice on new structures and procedures has to be ready. The project leader is Karin, a senior HRM staff member.

The project group

The project group spends much time studying every aspect of the situation. Marja helps the group to get a clear and lively view of the situation by working a lot with visualisations: mind maps, time lines, flow-charts. Project group members broaden their view further by visiting other organisations. The rules of the game, describing responsibilities and tasks of participants, are consciously discussed. Marja pays special attention to the roles of Thijs and Karin. Every time they suggest a top-down action, she discusses with them the consequences in relation to the goals, bringing the principles of LSI to the fore. The project group designs a tailor-made programme for a one-day conference, based on the Real Time Strategic Change format. They invite all personnel and a representation of external stakeholders. The visualisations and the rules of the game for the conference have been attached to the invitation letter.

> In the evaluation interview (May 2009) Karin says: "We spent a lot of time in meetings with the project group and with the management team. In the beginning, Thijs and I wondered where this would lead. Was it all necessary, would it bring concrete results? Now, I think success was also due to this preparation. Just because we profoundly explored the past and present situation in the project group, and tested our views in the conference, people became aware of what was going well and what had to be changed".

The conference

In November 2006, up to 50 participants gather for a full day in a former monastery, an attractive and inspiring place. Being together with colleagues from all departments gives a feeling of 'we

have to do this together'. External stakeholders are also present: representatives of the supervisory Board, local government, and of client and partner organisations. This is a little frightening at first for some employees, because internal problems will be discussed. Are we going to hang out dirty laundry? It turns out to be a satisfying day of hard work, filled with reviewing the time lines, discussing what people are glad, sad or mad about, envisioning the near future and agreements on the next steps. Participants work alternately in mixed table groups, homogeneous stakeholder groups and in plenary. A cartoonist helps to express the mixed feelings and there is laughter as well as confusion. The atmosphere is positive and constructive, which is quite a change after years of muttering and resistance. The facilitator Marja does not seem to do a lot, yet everything runs smoothly.

Reporting

Everyone is very positive about the conference. There is more trust in the change process. Some employees even regret they chose to work that day. The project group integrates the results of the conference with their own analysis and offers a detailed plan for the reorganisation in December 2006.

> In the email evaluation shortly after the conference, a participant writes: "After this day I see that change is continuous, and it won't always be a pleasure, but I see this as a challenge. I certainly want to contribute to thinking how we can profile our library to the public in a way that guarantees our right to exist."

Effects of the LSI after two years

In May 2007, the reorganisation was realised. The knowledge teams were dissolved and the tasks of central office and decentralised offices redefined. Implementation was fast, less time was needed for discussion with the Works Council (OR). People reflect more on how they are doing in comparison with other libraries and branches. The management team and the organisation learned to combine top-down and bottom-up decisions in a more balanced way. Leadership is more distributed, therefore managers experience more room to manoeuvre. There has not been another large group conference so far, but more participative meetings have been held and a new participative development project has been planned, since there is still much to do in order to realise an innovative culture.

> Thijs (evaluation interview April 2009): "The conference brought several anchor points for the reorganisation. The work and advice of the project group were legitimised. These anchor points include learning that you have to pull off certain things together. We did not actually pull it off during the conference, but we saw the main themes".

11 Before the start: Assessment of preconditions

11.1 Context/task factors: Is LSI the right approach?

If the task is not important enough, don't hold the meeting (Marvin Weisbord)

This Chapter provides guidelines for assessing and discussing the preconditions, before the start or at the beginning of an LSI. The guidelines concern the success factors in the categories Context/Task, Client and Consultant. For each success factor, the observable indicators have been successively summed up and presented in a highlighted box. Where needed, a factor has been clarified and illustrated with examples from the case study and from literature. The guidelines have been presented following the structure of the Evaluation Table (see Appendix 2.

> Note: This chapter should be read and used as a Reference Guide and parts are presented as a list rather than a story. To be able to follow the illustrative stories from the case study, it might be necessary to (re)read the thick description of a specific Case as presented in Chapter 10.

The task is important

Indicators:

- A leader with an itch to scratch, a compelling business purpose
- An urgent problem or issue, business as usual is not a viable option
- A super-ordinate goal or shared concern
- Multilevel issues
- The expected benefits must outweigh the costs

"Why this, why now?" is the first question to be answered. Is LSI the appropriate approach for the situation (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Schruijer, 2001; Sorrow, 2006; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). Huxham & Vangen (2000) advise using multiparty collaboration only when there is no other option left. The benefits must outweigh the costs and large group meetings are considered to be expensive and time-consuming (Polanyi, 2002).

Only for serious problems
In the evaluation interview, Wiely (Client in Case 2) states very clearly: "Such a two-day conference with an overnight stay in a nice castle in a forest works for sure, but you should only do it if the problem is really serious, a problem that will sink you if it is not solved."

Time pressure is both condition and constraint
LSI is recommended especially for urgent situations. In Case 2 we see how urgency puts a proper contracting and preparation under pressure. Expectation management is crucial: what is realistic, considering the time available? How much can be expected of a short LSI with a brief large group meeting? Although unexpected success as well as failure may occur, I think it is important that the consultant discusses the options and possible effects that may be expected with the client in the contracting phase.

Who creates the context?
Zero i.e. not doing something, can be a meaningful message too, in the context the recipient creates (Bateson, 2002, p. 43). For an LSI it is relevant to communicate about the context:
- Before the LSI, the client and the consultant create context
- In an LSI the planning team creates context
- In an LGI we create each other's context.

Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task

Indicators:
- No one of the stakeholders can do alone what they can to together
- Need for joint problem definition and strategy in diversity and conflict
- A basic willingness to work together, awareness that collaboration is necessary.

The situation is complex and/or uncertain

Indicators:
- A high level of fragmentation
- Uncertain, fast-changing situations
- Multiple complexities and ambiguities to deal with, nobody could possibly know all the details or all the answers
- The change is transformational
- Unprecedented or breakthrough changes call for unprecedented or breakthrough action.

Note here that an organisation with an unhealthy climate is related to Client success factors and not to factors of the Task.

Contra-indications Task/Context

"You can succeed in large groups – say 50 to 2000 people- in ways that people once considered impossible. You can also waste everybody's time" (Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff)

Indicators:
- The Issue is not important to anyone
- Task is abstract and likely to lead to talk without action
- One-way information transfer is required (confidentiality, loss of face, knowledge transfer)
- Individual professionals can solve the problem

- No opportunity for change, due to lack of resources, energy, time or lack of actual influence.

Urgency is not a linear factor for 'When to use LSI'. In very urgent situations, in acute crises for instance, top-down decision-making and managing are often the right approach. One can think of fighting fires, riots, terrorism and accidents. However, the level of trust before the incident influences the effectiveness of the intervention (Weick, 1993).

LSI in urgent situations
Kerber & Buono (2005, p. 33) signal that when circumstances involve a strong sense of urgency, a directed approach to change may be necessary, even in complex and uncertain situations. They refer to circumstances when personal safety is no longer guaranteed, when protection of customers is needed, or organisational survival is at stake. Concerning the latter situation however, LSI has been used to involve stakeholders in real time rescue operations with large groups of up to 1000 or more participants (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Holman & Devane, 1999; Owen, 1997).

Contra-indication
Dick (school director in Case 2): For me this participative process is totally irrelevant. I have so many more important things to worry about.

11.2 Client factors: Are leaders willing to support LSI?

People will only do what they are ready, willing and able to do (Marvin Weisbord)

Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power

Indicators:
Leaders:
- Have good intentions
- Are credible, no hidden agendas
- Show willingness to work from a shared power-base to achieve shared ownership
- Believe that collaboration is more likely to stimulate follow-up
- Tolerate uncertainty, are able to stay with 'not knowing'
- Minimise the influence of power differences and adopt a neutral position
- Allow local control and establish clear boundaries
- Are willing to live with the outcome.

In the ReSearch Conference (see Chapter 8), the factor 'Leaders are willing to collaborate' was chosen as the most important item in the evaluation instrument. The behaviour and attitude of the CEO is more important than words; they have to show some vulnerability and openness to results. Leaders often face the dilemma of control versus letting go, so real time work with the

leadership team from the start is important. In more hierarchical settings, participants expect leaders to take responsibility.

Then again, who are 'the leaders' if everyone is responsible? It is better to define leaders as 'opinion leaders' and 'key players' as well as 'bosses'. The factor 'Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility' is also in the top five of the most important items of the evaluation instrument. If you have to deal with a non-democratic environment, you must ensure those with power are in the room.

Exploring readiness of the organisation for LSI
In our interview conversation, Ronald and I (the facilitators of Case 1 and 2) have been comparing the two cases we facilitated, especially the course of the contracting phase with the client.
Ronald: "It is important to explore whether the organisation is ready for a collaborative approach. But how do you know? We misjudged the situation in Case 2. To be honest, I simply wanted to work with LSI. That was the wrong way to start; it hinders you from looking at the interest of the organisation. Then again, at first, we tried a design with marketing workshops and that did not look very promising either. We did not expect it to bring about the desired change of school directors taking responsibility for acquisition. Our hopes for LSI were higher. For Case 1 it feels a bit like a lucky shot. We had more time to find out what we wanted together with the client. The choice of LSI emerged in the process. If you have the chance to talk with people and you can involve enough key players, then the form develops in the process. If time is short, you have to organise management alignment more directly."
Tonnie: "I agree. We do not call it an LSI or some other strange and unfamiliar term, but a well-known 'vision workshop' or 'alignment meeting', to get an idea of what managers want and are ready to do. Only then, can you start with a planning group for the further change process."
Ronald: "And it means you should also be open to ending up in a top-down approach if necessary."

Leaders are willing to spend time and money to do it 'by the book'

Indicators:
Leaders:
- Are prepared to support follow-up, carefully balancing between too much and too little support
- Act as champions who sponsor the process, or want to involve a champion
- Show commitment and persistence.

Role of the Board of Governors
(Continuation of the reflection on Case 1 and 2)
Tonnie: "One particular moment during Case 1 that springs to mind was in the planning group when we heard two governors say 'Yes, we'll turn up, but we're not going to contribute'. You then clearly said 'No'. If the Board does not turn up and contribute, then we will NOT do it."
Ronald: "Yes, because that would not work within the overall framework. It was also a factor that the governors in the planning group were going to be isolated, and the Board would then be unable to get a feel for it and then would just go back to doing their own thing."

Tonnie: "That is why you will have to think very carefully about who will be in the planning group and who not."
Ronald: "Yes, Jan and Frank (governors) supported this approach, but it became clear that this was not the case for the entire Board. The fact that the Board was present was of essential importance for success. It was also important to cover the head teacher's back, as he also stuck his neck out along with the two governors."
A useful guideline is to follow the clues provided by the specific LGI method (see Appendix 1).

How long will the process take? How long will the LGI take? Based on their experience with LSI, facilitators must pay a great deal of attention, together with the client and the planning group, to what is achievable within a certain time frame. Especially in sectors such as education and health care, in which it is difficult to take a large number of people out of their regular work schedule for a prolonged period, there is a tendency to schedule too little time for everyone in the system to meet. This results in insufficient interaction, information processing and conversation depth. The issue that must take priority is continually "What are the minimum requirements necessary to reach your goals?" The problem is that this is often unpredictable. This is why expectation management is important: even as facilitator, one must be honest and admit if one is unsure about something.

Sponsor commitment is absolutely necessary
"We do not do this work until it is legitimately linked to decision-making" (Shmulyian, et al., 2010)

Political climate allows people to participate and contribute

Indicators:
- Leaders realise and acknowledge that trust is unlikely to be present from the start
- Conditions for trust-building are created by providing a minimal structure
- Careful consideration of cross-cultural communication
- Degree of negative stereotyping between groups does not prevent participation of specific stakeholders
- Willingness to opt for a different way, despite political vulnerability.

The chicken-egg question in assessment of preconditions for LSI
Part of a discussion during the ReSearch Conference: There is a paradox in the conditions you need for LSI (enough trust to show up and communicate with each other), the complex situations LSI is indicated for (inherent conflicts and different interests) and the intended effects (more trust and better communication). Some conditions cannot be created. There is no consensus on how much trust there should be from the start. Some say no trust at all is a contra indication for LSI, some say trust- building has to be done anyway, so assume no trust to begin with. No trust at all is a contra-indication; no fear at all is a contra indication as well. We need indicators for 'enough trust to start'. Your feeling about the relation with the client is an indicator for success.

What is trust? In a collaboration process, Sandra Schruijer and Leopold Vansina (2004, p. 571) define trust as 'a state of perceived vulnerability or risk that is derived from an individual's uncertainty regarding the motives, intentions and prospective actions of others on whom they depend'. Trust is viewed as fundamental to any collaborative process, since it (Huxham & Vangen, 2005):

- Facilitates recognition and acceptance of interdependency for dealing with the issues at hand
- Helps people cope with anxiety, knowing others will not take unfair advantage of them
- Reduces complexity through increasing the response predictability of actors
- Replaces external, often distrusted, controls by internal ones.

Accept people the way they are
"There is something about accepting others just the way they are that contributes greatly to community and builds trust. You can than make the purpose, goal and task the driving forces." (Weisbord & Janoff, 2007, p. 69).

Contra-indications Client

Indicators:
- Highly-charged political situations with no space for open discussion or follow-up action; fight-flight behaviour, apparent indifference
- Leaders delegate the process to subordinates and show up only at the beginning and/or the end
- Focus on personal gain, win-lose dynamic
- Sponsor wants to squeeze work into too short a time
- Fast cycle of leadership succession
- Withdrawal behaviour: declining attendance at planning meetings
- Unspoken agenda: ongoing negotiation and discussion outside the planning group about the central issue
- Communication with responsible staff is done by an intermediary, such as a project leader.

Negative (trust-destroying) events are more visible, noticeable and credible than positive (trust-building) events. They carry more weight in judgements, and are very difficult to invalidate through experience (Cornelis, 1993; Schruijer & Vansina, 2004; Weick, 1995).

11.3 Consultant factors: Are facilitators skilled to conduct an LSI?

Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client

Indicators:
Facilitators:
- Insist on adequate time with the client to clarify the contract, and discuss implications for the process and for follow-up

- Work on alignment with (top)leaders, share information openly before the LGI: in a workshop/meeting with the management team to demonstrate the principles and implications for personal roles and follow-up
- Help to set clear goals by starting with solid understanding of what is to be accomplished with the process; the task is well-defined
- Bring and keep the principles of LSI front and centre
- Focus on the bigger process, not on an event or method
- Help to create clear boundaries that create a meaningful playing field: enough room for people to play, but people do not get lost; balancing top-down and bottom-up decisions
- Help leaders manage their anxiety about uncertainty of the process and loss of control
- Avoid the 'they won't come dialogue'; people nearly always come once they know the importance of the task and who else is coming
- Build follow-up into their fee structure, at least an evaluation meeting, and offer advice and consultation on ways to increase diffusion and support sustainability.

Demonstrating and allowing people to experience the principles of LSI is more effective than verbal explanation and discussion. This can be achieved, for example, by creating a timeline for the process in the planning group.

Making a timeline with the planning group
In Case 1, I facilitated making a timeline in the planning group meeting. On a white board, we gathered the crucial moments so far, and those already planned. How far should the horizon for the future be? What is the title of the project? Who are the stakeholders? Who is already involved? Just as important as the 'facts and figures' of the project is the collective process of making sense of the situation. Members become aware again of why they wanted this in the first place, what preceded and what the follow-up after the large group meeting might look like. Everything has been placed into perspective. Possible doubts disappeared, clear conditions and boundaries were formulated, and an action plan was made to make it all happen. Clients usually expect facilitators to make comments such as: "If you focus too little attention on …… (timescale, target groups, other success factors), then it is not going to work."

Stretching the focus to the wider system
In Case 3, the consultant did an excellent job in exploring the situation with the client. She helped to stretch the focus from the issue to the system and the wider context of the issue. In addition, she continued to discuss the principles of the LSI approach every time the director proposed a top-down action: Do you realise what the consequence of a top-down order in a participative process might be? Is that really what you want? As a result the director learned how to combine top-down and bottom-up change processes.

Alistair Crombie (1985) emphasises being realistic on how much actual freedom and opportunity exist for 'futures creation'. For instance, a recession might close down futures by lack of resources.

Facilitators manage expectations

Indicators
Facilitators:
- Make a conscious choice for the application of LSI, making the aims of the LSI explicit
- Check and explore each other's assumptions about LSI
- Do not raise expectations they cannot fulfil, they aim for good enough rather than for unrealistic outcomes
- Are able to explain why they are doing what they are doing (methodical reasoning) in everyday language
- Show energy and decisiveness
- Show positive personality, appearance of trust, maturity, calmness, integrity.

Successful design
In the evaluation interview, Eric (General Director in Case 2) says: "I found the meeting to be a very positive experience. It had already exceeded expectations just with the number of people who attended. In addition, you saw them actively walking around during the session that evening, and you could tell that people were highly enthusiastic to address all kinds of issues together. I found this to be very useful, and the format was extremely well-suited. The constant changes of group ensured that you were not talking to the same people all the time and therefore allowed you to get the reactions of many more people. Of course, the presentations also exceeded expectations. The posters looked fantastic, and inspired great things. There was also the entire wall of sticky-note notes, grouped according to 'what are the particular needs' or 'in what areas should we take action'."

Frans de Waal (2005, pp. 194-195) describes his experiments with apes and the principle of reciprocity. This is a transaction that serves both parties and is ruled by expectations, similar to those among humans (quid pro quo). That is why expectation management is an important success factor in projects, especially in LSI, due to the diversity of participants involved and the large groups of people present in one room. Clear contracts are needed. It is necessary to be clear about what can be controlled and what you have to let go of. Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff explicitly negotiate the contract, written on a flip chart and visible for everyone, at the beginning of the large group meeting (the Future Search conference). The contract remains on the wall until the end of the conference, as is also done with all reports and models produced in the conference.

Facilitators are aware of their own role

Indicators:
Facilitators:
- Are conscious of their impact on the system, from the start
- Are aware of their own assumptions about change and the role of knowledge
- Know their own strengths and weaknesses; facilitation is preferably done with two facilitators who complement each other.

Awareness of own role in Case 2
Personal log, 13 February 2007: "The Open Space with the head teachers in …… took place on 1 February. I found it to be a difficult experience. I had to spend a great deal of time preparing the room. The turnout was good (all chairs were filled). The start was wrong for an OS: the introductions were too long and too leading. In the evaluation discussion with the planning group, a great deal of criticism was aired with regard to the organisation and my performance: programme too long, presentation too monotonous/not compelling enough, wrong format. However, strangely enough, we managed to achieve our objectives: encouraging consciousness-raising, commitment, ideas and initiatives within the group. My conclusion: I must indeed give greater consideration to my tone and my presentation, but at the same time, I functioned as the fall guy. My reasoning was well-chosen. In a group that is used to following other people's ideas and not acting on their own initiative in the service-wide recruitment of students, facilitating, structuring and supervising are just more of the same. On the other hand, giving people space and encouraging them to fill it does work, although it is not suited to everyone. Consider Mrs J. for example, from whom I have heard nothing but negative comments.

Difference in facilitation between Case 1 and Case 2
Personal log, 11 March 2007: Faith in your own abilities and the confidence to assume your own role effectively are important success factors. This can be seen when you compare my performances in Case 1 and Case 2, based on the feedback from the participants. In Case 2 my performance was restricted by both my own belief and the fact that as facilitator, I must remain in the background. My mediocre performance had been amplified by the tense atmosphere that I experienced.

Faciliators are skilled to work with large groups

Indicators:
Facilitators:
- Are tolerant for ambiguity
- Have the objective to accept people as they are, not as facilitators might wish them to be
- Work on staying calm, to contain 'messiness' long enough to prevent premature structuring
- Can contain frustration projected onto them
- Are prepared to let go of their need to control the change process, but hold on to their vision during ups and downs of the project
- Are able to deal with differences and competitive attitudes in a constructive way, as function of the jointly-defined goals
- Are experienced enough to deal with the circumstances
- Have experience in working with large groups
- Are improving their competence in working with large groups, for example through intervision, supervision or training.

For some LGI methods a facilitator has to be trained and have a lot of experience in working with group dynamics (Future Search, Search Conference, and Real Time Strategic Change). For other LGI methods it is stated that anyone can do it after reading and following the guidelines. Anyone can host a World Café (Brown & Isaacs, 2005), or facilitate an Open Space (Owen, 1997) after reading the guidelines. For all LGIs a facilitator has to be (more or less) skilled to work with large groups.

Regularly straighten out your scrolls of wisdom
On Friday 9 March, a crucial meeting was held with the planning group for Case 1. I created three scenarios and they selected a kind of World Café. Filling out the programme was the matter on the agenda. In preparation, I read the book *The World Café* the day before the meeting, mainly to look for ways of reaching comprehensive conclusions. A very brief scan through the book earlier had not provided me with any new ideas. However, by reading through the book more carefully, I was reminded of a couple of important basic principles of the World Café:
- The unusual mix of participants
- The art of hosting
- Working with pictures as well as words
- The 'mood of the room'
- The importance of the question "What affected you the most?"
- Emphasising everybody's actual *contribution* rather than just their attendance and participation.

This scenario reminds me of the story of the Buddhist scrolls of wisdom, which have the tendency to roll up over time. You must regularly straighten the scrolls out to remain conscious of the wisdom contained.

Facilitators believe in the principles of LSI

Indicators:
Facilitators:
- Adopt an open system perspective, paying attention to fragmentation and limitations
- Recognise and respect diversity
- Believe that ordinary people can engage in productive dialogue
- Take contributions of participants seriously, so they do not prompt, correct, or interpret people; all participants are seen as experts
- See themselves as co-investigators
- Focus on possibilities for the future, not on problems now and in the past
- Seek to alter conditions rather than behaviour
- Promote and teach self-management.

In the member check conferences (see Chapter 8), there was a discussion about the word 'believe'. Some participants wanted the word changed into 'adopt' or 'see the relevance' or 'are willing to work with'. However, for this Guide I hold on to the word 'believe'. The principles of LSI rest on a world view, a set of fundamental assumptions. If a facilitator does not share these assumptions, it will show in attitude and approach towards participants. I seriously doubt that it is possible for a facilitator to demonstrate a professional attitude of taking people seriously as they are,

while having thoughts like 'what are they doing here?'. That is why I kept the word 'believe'. In my experience, it is essential to explicitly demonstrate that you believe in the possibilities of the group.

Facilitators have to fulfil their role convincingly
Personal log, 2 June 2007: The parent conference was a great success. A great deal of effort went into the organisation in the days running up to the conference. We spent the whole afternoon arranging the hall. At around 4.00 p.m., I held a briefing for the supporting team, the Board of Governors and the planning group. It went well. I was self-aware and I did what I had to do with conviction. The members of the Board and practically all other people present were enthusiastic. The question is now how things will go in the future. The Board of Governors have asked me if I will put together the report, including all contributions.

Facilitation of an LSI is a 'hands-off' approach (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a), that enables people to take responsibility for themselves. The role of the facilitators is to create and contain a holding environment to work in a collaborative task system (Owen, 1997; Schruijer, 2001).

Ordinary people in an LSI?
Participation in 'conversations that matter' is well within the purview and capacity of ordinary people, and can be experienced at increasing levels of scale without a great deal of formal training (Brown, 2001; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995).

Contra-indications Consultant

Indicators:
- Facilitators want to sell LSI
- Facilitators use abstract jargon, do not search for connection to the needs of the client
- Facilitators take an expert role, believing they have the right answers.

Self-management of participants or facilitators having the right answers?
Sometimes facilitators do not realise they are taking an expert role, having the right answers, instead of stimulating self-management of participants in the large group conference. For example, in an evaluation interview with a facilitator of an Open Space, the consultant says (Poppelaars, 2010, p. 19): "The case was a successful trajectory; our consultants did everything they could. Later in the process, we even made a big project plan with all the detailed information they needed to establish the project. Therefore, if you look at the Open Space method we did everything we could, we have used the principles well. Nevertheless, we were dependent on the people in the organisations, which we could not influence. People were incompetent; we do not do business anymore with that kind of person." Evaluation of the inquirer: "A lot of paperwork has been produced….. What were the roles of the other parties in establishing the project plan? Was the Open Space not the right intervention because of incompetent people?"

12 During the LSI: Guidelines for design and management

12.1 Planning and design of the LSI

> "In regard to the design, we see it as a projection screen onto which people put their experiences, visions and aspirations." (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a, p. 16)

This chapter provides guidelines for assessing and discussing the planning and design of an LSI, during an LSI. The guidelines concern the success factors of the category Intervention of the Evaluation Table, as presented in Appendix 2.

As in the previous Chapter, for each success factor, the observable indicators have been successively summed up, and presented in a highlighted box. Where needed, a factor has been clarified and illustrated with examples from the case study and from literature.

Note: This chapter should be read and used as a Reference Guide; parts are presented as a list rather than a story. To be able to follow the illustrative stories from the case study, it might be necessary to (re)read the thick description of a specific Case, as presented in Chapter 10.

Large Group Intervention (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort

Indicators:
- A post-event strategy, or a sequence of LGIs, is planned or built in
- The timing of the LGI: not too early and not too late in the process
- Road map of the bigger process is available.

Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics

Indicators:
- Planning team/steering committee with key stakeholders, people who have the credibility and connections to get all the other participants to come
- Planning team with diversity of perspectives, interests, identities, potential contributions; a cross-section of the system
- Knowledge and ability to select stakeholder groups, especially the under-bound groups
- Facilitator helps the planning group find common ground of interests across all the stakeholder groups

- Awareness that whole system issues surface as a prelude to the larger meeting; points of conflicts are elicited
- Alternative designs with enough diversity are offered and discussed
- An invitation strategy for getting people to commit to the meeting time
- Invitation with strategic questions and a challenging title
- Conscious attention is given to the inclusiveness of participants who represent alternative or opposing perspectives on the issue at hand
- Division of responsibilities is clearly enunciated at a very early stage; participants are responsible for the outcomes of the Large Group conference
- Planning group has enough confidence in the process.

Quick fixes
John Tarling (2008, p. 50) cites from his personal communication with Edgar Schein: "Western pragmatism has always favoured quick fixes, magic bullets, root causes and other instant solutions over processes that are less predictable, that take more time, etc…. even though the evidence is that if you want real change, it is a process you need."

Working with the whole system in the room brings dilemmas of conflicting interests. In design and management of the LGI, interests have to be balanced as best as one can. (Boos & Königswieser, 2000). The game is won or lost in the planning, not the meeting itself. If planners can get the right people for the task and accept the time commitment, they are likely to have a successful meeting. (Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a). For a Future Search they schedule at least two days of meetings with a steering committee or planning team. The ideal size is six to eight people who have among them the credibility and connections to get all the other participants to come.

Advantages of two facilitators in the planning group meetings
In the evaluation interview, Ronald and Tonnie are discussing their performance as facilitators in the planning group. Ronald says: "Case 2 was our second collaboration. We had learned our lessons from Case 1. Roles had been better distributed, and it was easier to press on with issues such as what we were going to do that day and what was necessary to enable this. Moreover, I was able to spend more time working on the question of what exactly the Board of governors wants to achieve, so the long-term goals of the whole process were constantly monitored. The combination was very good. You were particularly effective with content-related matters, which was essential. However, working on three levels (content, involvement *and* monitoring the process) is a lot to ask. The more contradictory the interests and ideas you have, the more important it is to bring in a second person. If you fail to achieve a feeling of 'We're going to succeed together' during the planning group, and then subsequently encounter a sufficient number of stumbling points, then you must simply say NO and adopt a different approach. In the planning group, you will deal with people with a variety of different backgrounds, opinions and experience. You will also meet pessimists (see Case 2), advisors who think they know better (see Case 1), and clients who have doubts about whether the participation aspect is essential (Case 2 and 3). In Case 2, we had to defend the approach in the planning group. In Case 1, we were more united; we chose as a unity to do it that way. It was a more equal partnership."

If the conditions are right, preparing an LGI can be simple
Harrison Owen, founding father of Open Space, participating in the online conference on success factors and effects of LSI: "I have another off-the-wall thought. I think we work much too hard in preparing for an LGI, and in the case of an Open Space, all that work can even be counterproductive. If the conditions are right (real issue, lots of diversity, complexity, conflict and urgency -- the issue will be painfully clear and endless committee work preparing the 'theme' question is not needed. Just name the elephant under the table, and invite those who care to come to do so. As for the rest -- sit in a circle, create a bulletin board, open a market place, and go to work. I have seen it all come together in an hour or less even with very large groups. When the issue is there and people care -- everything pretty much takes care of itself. This is called self-organisation."

12.2 Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions

"This is the first time I am experiencing what it means to be assigned to a stakeholder group; I do not feel like a researcher, I want to be in the practitioners group." (Marvin Weisbord, as a participant of the ReSearch conference)

Indicators:
- Principles of LSI are respected in design, using them in combination
- Adequate LGI method selected, limitations of the method are discussed
- Awareness of pattern-setting activities that may amplify or dampen the effects of change after the large group meeting
- Awareness that the mere categorisation of people into different groups is a sufficient condition for negative stereotyping to develop
- Enough time for preparation and invitation
- Good timing of events considering the circumstances
- Minimal and flexible design for real time adaptation, no more rules than strictly necessary
- A broad spectrum of learning styles is met, work forms addressing head, heart and hands
- Division of work done by planning team and in large group meeting is balanced with available time and budget
- LGI is interactive as much as possible
- Enough time and space to get the work done
- A 2-3 day LGI
- Adequate project management.

Responsibility of the participants and the ambitions of the LSI
Ronald (facilitator in Case 1 and 2): "In Case 1, we had an enjoyable and successful meeting, but it was a rather straightforward matter that was addressed. This could certainly not be said for Case 2, in which there were more contradictory interests."
Maurits, (participant in Case 1): "If you truly wanted to achieve organisational development, then a broader group of stakeholders should have been present in order to create a balanced

vision. For example, the implications for the teachers. Now it is simply a sort of wish list. Which is always good. Or you must do it in two steps. At the end of the day, you must try to avoid complaining too much, in order to ensure that the responsibility is shared more with the parents. When are the parents willing to pitch in? What can be referred back to the organisation? This way, everybody gains greater insight into the impact of decisions."

How long should the Large Group meeting last? Whenever possible, take 2 to 3 days for one LGI, preferably with all participants 'sleeping twice' at the conference site. This is confirmed by literature (Weisbord 1995, 2004) and was emphasised in the ReSearch Conferences. However, when the focus is on the bigger process and there is more than one Large Group meeting, the total interactive time counts too. Further research is recommended on this topic, as will be discussed in Section 15.6.

New language that allows discussion of the current discipline language supports increase of competence to act. The new language grows by repetition, and when there is no stopping rule. As a result, it helps to see more possibilities for future action, because more information flows between the old and the new language (Zeeuw, 1991, p. 51). As the LGI lasts longer, the higher the chance will be for new language to develop and for seeing more possibilities for the future.

Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI

Indicators:

- Inclusion of stakeholders: whole system is in the room (representation, micro cosmos), working across boundaries of the organisation; minimum is the '3 x 3 rule': 3 levels with 3 functions
- Invite those who can influence or are influenced (follow the acronym ARE-IN: people with Authority, Resources, Expertise, Information, Need)
- Build critical mass, with capacity to facilitate and lead change
- Highly diverse group: interests, opinions, age, sex, culture
- Unusual meeting: provide a forum for dialogue among people who rarely have an opportunity to hear one another
- Stakeholders can and will come.

At the centre of all LGI methods is the recognition that the knowledge required for successful change resides within the stakeholders who comprise the organisational system (Geurts, Altena, et al., 2007; Purser & Griffin, 2008). That is why careful consideration of who needs to be there is important, by doing stakeholder analysis (Bryson, 2003; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010c). Getting the right people in the room is one of the most important success factors, according to the participants of the research conferences.

Making use of diversity
Pedler et al. state (2003, p. 33): "To value and make use of diversity, experience, history, skill, profession, gender, race and community, requires frameworks where people can make connections and collaborative contributions to the bigger picture….this means 'getting everyone in the room together'.

Who must be present at the 'whole system in the room' events? - everybody who plays an essential role in making the process work. If expert knowledge is required, experts are a stakeholder group as well. Clients often dislike inviting external stakeholders, because they want to sort things out internally first, or are afraid to 'hang out dirty laundry'. However, ignoring external stakeholders is a wasted opportunity, as the same people means the same interaction. It is the consultant's job to discuss why the diversity and involvement of stakeholders is important and what it can achieve. In addition, the concerns of the client must be taken seriously in order to determine how wide 'the system' should be chosen, considering what is achievable in light of the specific situation.

Diversity of participants is important
For Case 2, we did not implement that into the design properly, as mainly head teachers were present. In Case 1, the situation was better, as teachers, head teachers, parents and governors were all present, as we had considered the proportions in advance. The system was best represented in Case 3, and this appears to have borne fruit. Karin, project manager of Case 3: "We found it exciting to have external parties present. You are giving them a glimpse behind the scenes. In the end, the experiences of both employees and external parties were positive. A number of real eye-opening situations arose. The external parties found us to be very internally oriented, while employees considered themselves to be very externally oriented."

Responsibility of participants: consultation or decision-making
While participants are free to recommend action, they are not necessarily actors and may have no authority to adopt or reject proposed courses of action. Neither might they be required to take responsibility for implementing decisions. This places the participant in a comfortable position when suggesting ways forward that may in reality not be culturally, politically, or financially feasible (Shaw et al., 2004, p. 462).

Shaw et al. (2004) stress the importance of providing clear rules and guidelines for participation, for what is to be expected from them during the meeting and for what is expected from the meeting as a whole. As a consequence, if you do not want a compromised solution, if you do not want to look for common ground, do not choose an LSI.

Representation: consideration of those who are not present, contact is supported by the larger social system

Indicators:

- Prevent 'ghosts' or 'Prebsents'; champions who are only psychologically present can have a strong impact, with real or imagined power
- Identify key stakeholders who were unable to attend and arrange to brief them immediately
- All relevant parties are represented in an acceptable way, the number of participants is considered consciously
- Re-use the event briefing materials and working notes to sweep in people who were unable to attend.

Prevent 'Ghosts'
Sandra Schruijer and Leopold Vansina point out (2004, p. 5): "The dynamics of the collaborative processes are consequently not confined to the boundaries of the negotiation table. They extend in space and time beyond what is visually present. 'Ghosts' can be present of established authorities and institutions, which have dealt with the same or similar issues."

LGI enables everyone's contributions by inclusiveness and building trust

Indicators:

- Non-coercive process: people are free to come, no threats or sanctions
- Meeting managed so the entire group can be in dialogue at each stage
- No one is in the 'expert' role: no long monologues, presentations etcetera, each person having a chance to speak and listen
- Search for common ground: not an activism against the authority structure, but for the world we want
- Powerful questions that stimulate mind, heart and soul to attract collaborative engagement
- Facilitators invite openness, but participants decide what to reveal
- Leaders express openness, not control; they do not intervene or try to control the process, and they contain anxiety
- A structure that lets weaker people contribute as well, with room also for individual work: a balanced mixture of work in small groups, large group and individual work
- Structure of the event/day facilitates containment, dealing with unpleasant feelings
- No press invited; if unavoidable, pay special attention to their attitude and reports
- The composition of the small groups must build the trust that this is not another form of manipulation
- Participants need no special knowledge or prior training to succeed
- Balance in energetic level of activities
- Meeting face-to-face is stimulated in order to build trust, share information and enhance new relationships; use of technology must serve, not hinder, this process
- Duration and work forms meet the needs of people who are not used to or unable to sit still for a longer time (for instance children, disabled, outdoor workers)
- All recording is done publicly, on flip-charts or large paper sheets

- Reception before the meeting permits release of tension gathered during the journey to the venue.

LSI principles also work in a very hierarchical organisation
It seems to be possible to introduce major changes both in management and worker cooperation in a psychosocial work environment, and at the same time leave unchanged the conditions tied to the existing Tayloristic concept of productions. Hasle & Møller (2007, p. 415) describe a change process from a culture based on conflicts and opposition to a culture based on mutual trust and respect. Although they describe an incremental, spontaneous change process without a conscious strategy and planning, I see similar working principles as in Future Search:
- Driven by a serious and collective problem
- A search for common ground and starting actions from there
- Action-focused
- Sharing of information in dialogues
- Exploring of each other's perspectives to build a shared understanding
- Continuity in seeking each other out for discussion.

Tom Gilmore and Deborah Bing (2006, p. 383) stress that individual work, such as reflecting silently, journalising, jotting down ideas, voting with dots etcetera can be enormously powerful in an LGI, because being in a large group can lead to decreased risk-taking, decreased ability to usefully discriminate, and fear of standing out or being original.

12.3 Large Group Intervention is performed well

Divergence of perspectives: explore the whole before fixing any parts, engaging new connections, building a common database of the system

Indicators:
- Reality is perceived in the complexity of its constant becoming; focus is on dynamics in relations, not on positions
- Models of connections in the system are created and visualised, so each person experiences the whole of their organisation or community, in time and space
- Making sense together by honouring the past
- Engage in dialogue about perspectives on the present
- Elicit people's dreams, making a shared picture of the preferred future
- Cross-pollination connects diverse perspectives, by travelling small groups or sitting in mixed stakeholder groups
- The right information is publicly available at the right time to stakeholders
- Group memory is created by visualisation; everything is worked out on i.e. flip-charts
- Sufficient 'soak' time to digest all the data, interpretations and emotions.

Collectively-made models serve as transitional objects in supporting dialogue during an LGI, and as a tool for managing the large quantities of data and complexity that are produced in an LGI (D. Shaw, et al., 2004, pp. 455-456). To record knowledge shared, provide a dynamic shared view with which participants interact, both individually and collectively.

An LSI in a democratic culture:
Thijs (client in Case 3) says: "I think that the library culture is comparable to the culture in education. You are the boss, but only as long as you are tolerated by your colleagues. Two different cultures have been combined. The first is the democratic culture of making no decisions until everybody is in agreement. The second is the procedural hierarchy: if there is a procedure, then it is alright with people. Then we faced a second reorganisation. The first reorganisation was very drastic and created several traumas and conflicts. These are still noticeable to this day. There was a shocked reaction of 'What is the management going to do now?' This is a result of the democratic culture. We must all be in agreement, and furthermore, over a period of 30 years, nothing had changed.

Raising of consciousness by recognising the past
Karin (project leader in Case 3) says: "We took a good long look at what had happened in the past. We charted what went well and what did not. Thanks to the project group members putting their time into this and then testing it at the conference, people were able to see that not everything was necessarily better in the past. This also helped raise people's consciousness."

Data-gathering and analysis in LGIs
Some examples of collectively-made models in LGI methods are:
- Timelines, mind maps, flip-chart presentations, images of the future (Future Search)
- Agenda, market place, news room (Open Space Technology)
- Tablecloths, presentations, graphic recording of the process, sticky-note collections (World Café)
- Glad-sad-mad overviews, enlarged tables with business concepts (Real Time Strategic Change

Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management

Indicators:
- Structure facilitates self-management, puts the participants in leadership roles
- Focus on contribution: focus on the relations, we instead of the I
- No speakers or consultants telling participants what to think or what to do
- People do all their own data-gathering, assembly, analyses, dialogue and wrapping-up
- A level playing field, no remote control: people have the work authority needed to accept responsibility for their performance and to give what they have to offer, whatever position they come from
- 'The majority rules', or power plays in design and performance are not accepted
- People have a right to hold back and accept the consequences (no outcome).

Convergence of perspectives: tapping into collective intelligence, looking for common ground

Indicators:

- Listen and look together for patterns, insights and deeper questions
- Observing the thought process in yourself and others: notice fragmentation or incoherence
- Suspending judgment, assumptions and certainties: experience unwritten and unconscious rules and patterns
- Accessing the generative order in dialogue, sensing a mutually shared field, experience of a sense of community or collective wisdom
- Playful moments, signs of humour, excitement and joy.

Sense of solidarity
Jan (governor and parent in Case 1) says about the Parent Café: "Parents are very critical about matters concerning their child(ren). I found it to be a very good-natured, amicable atmosphere. Nobody, as could well have been the case, got up on their high horse or got angry. There was no 'the organisation should be doing x and y for my child' attitude, just a feeling of solidarity."

Feeling of working together towards a common goal
Frans (school director in Case 1): "The programme was good. We first worked in alternating groups. This helped create a feeling of 'Now we're really getting somewhere'. Later, we switched over to an assignment, to create something, and the feeling was complete. An excellent atmosphere was created. This is why I asked you if we can also have a similar programme for my team."

Memorable moments
Maurits, talking about the Parent Café in Case 1: "There was a particularly great moment for me, which was very closely related with our school. We were busy with a new construction, but we did not have a big enough budget to include a gym. I found this to be very objectionable, especially with the growing issue of obesity and such like. Then, during the round-table discussions, one man who spoke during the plenary evaluation delivered a hugely impassioned argument about more exercise in school. It was so fiery that it even made the papers! Indeed, that is the one. He performed wonderfully and I admire him greatly. That was a moment that I will not forget."

With large groups, breaks are especially beneficial during the convergence stage, as it gives participants the opportunity to discuss issues informally. So sleep twice as soaking time (D. Shaw, et al., 2004; Weisbord & Janoff, 1995).

Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process, symbolizes the principles of LSI

Indicators:

- Informal and hospitable atmosphere, a well-lit room with windows
- A neutral and accessible place for all participants, psychologically safe
- Location is physically safe for working with large groups
- Location and room setting encourage feelings of equality
- Personal comfort is as high as possible: beverages available at any time, good food, atmosphere, logistics, serving cultural needs
- Meeting physically is necessary to make eye contact: helps building trust, enhances new relationships and invites strategic conversations
- Residential conference gives participants time to interact outside the formal group time, away from other commitments
- Room setting facilitates sharing of information, knowledge and learning
- Facilitators are satisfied with the meeting room.

An emotionally safe location and room are important
Richard Seel (2001, p. 498) describes how he was invited for a meeting with 20 consultants. First, when they arrived at the office mentioned in the invitation, it turned out that they had to move to a venue at a new location. They arrive in a room with a large mirror on one wall. It turns out to be one-way glass. The room was a studio used for observing and recording marketing focus groups. He says: "I can remember we felt like schoolboys having to move in a row to another location." … "At a rational level it was a satisfying venue, but emotionally it felt uncomfortable and added to my sense of unease."

Manage conditions as much as you can before the LGI
Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff state (Weisbord & Janoff, 2007, p. 34): "You have the most leverage on a meeting's success before a single person walking into the room. The more you manage the conditions under which people meet, the less you will need to manage their meeting behaviour."

Action planning is done in the LGI, or soon after

Indicators:

- Energy and ideas are channelled into action planning, identifying next steps
- Common ground and future action first; problems and conflicts are background information
- Agreements are reviewed in plenary
- Meeting and progress are celebrated
- Immediate reporting at the end of the LGI, or soon after.

Action planning during the LGI is not always necessary
A participant in the ReSearch Conference says: "In my opinion, the necessary starting point is the feeling that you are going to succeed together. Making plans very soon after that can be too much. If this happened, I am certain that a number of the people who then said 'Why are we doing this?' would then turn to 'This is being shoved down our throats'. Giving things time to sink in before proceeding works better. It is also well-suited to the whole privatisation process that we were conducting. I personally had no objection at all to the fact that we did not start making plans immediately. "

Reflection on conditions and principles with participants in the LGI, in everyday language

Indicators:
- Continuation thinking begins at start-up, with reflecting on the action learning questions: what's happening, what are we learning, what do we need to do next, how to continue
- Participants understand they have a role in diffusion of the conference outcomes throughout the bigger system
- Attention is given to the conditions and principles that produce the effectiveness.

In the LGI, should we reflect on the active elements of LSI or not?
At the live research conference on validity and usability of the Practical Guide (17 September 2009) participants have been discussing whether to reflect on active elements of LSI during the LGI. A summary of the discussion: "At conferences, when discussing the active elements of LSI, a certain tension arises between encouraging participants to apply what they have learned after the process and the non-compulsory nature of the shared experience. During the LGI, people often cannot/do not want to see that it works, they just find it a waste of time, or difficult, or embarrassing. When and with whom must you focus on the principles? Discuss them with the client, in meetings with management. Put it on the agenda for the planning group and discuss the pros and cons. Remember that the overall LSI approach and LGI methods mean very little to most LGI participants. However, they often recognise the principles instinctively: I am being taken seriously as a person and my contribution makes a difference! Day-to-day language that matches the experiences of the participants, helps."

Building of capacity during the LSI to work participatively

Indicators:
- Facilitators help people explore and develop new patterns of working on engagement, in their own organisation and in the bigger system
- Training of support teams in designing their own LGI meetings, because grasping is easy, but applying is difficult
- Training is planned for people to carry out new roles and to relate with each other in new ways; combination of training and large group conferences.

LGI is managed well by facilitators

In the online research conference, Harrison Owen states: "Think of one more thing NOT to do as facilitator. The more you do, the more you disempower those who should be doing."

Indicators

Facilitators:

- Prepare themselves for 'holding space'; room set-up and materials are ready well before starting time
- Make people feel welcome, by setting the right tone
- Set the context by clarifying purpose and process
- Communicate clearly the rules of the game, displayed on the wall and/or in a participant workbook
- Deal with frustration, anger and anxiety; do not ignore them
- Facilitate exploration, work with diversity rather than reducing it via power, stereotyping, conflict avoidance, or conformity
- Help people avoiding discussion or debate to engage in constructive dialogue, in function of the jointly defined goals
- Understand thoroughly the level of polarisation and manage time to permit the fullest discussion of differences among participants; facilitate the deepest level of common ground instead of a superficial or narrow area
- Keep a clear focus on issues and task.

Invisible facilitators

Maurits (participant in the parent conference in Case 1): "The fact that you hardly noticed the facilitators, and that, in my opinion, they did very little that night, shows that they did a very good job. The preparation was clearly effective. The guidelines and instructions were clear and everything ran smoothly. I also did not get the feeling that you had to correct the course of the meeting, so if you did, you did it without us noticing. In short, well done! (Maurits is also a consultant, and in addition to being the parent of a pupil, he is also a member of the Central Participation Council.)

Shared purpose brings a sense of mutual dependency

When shared purpose is high, the feeling 'we're in this together' can foster exceptional unity and make people far more accepting and conciliatory than usual. Out-groups can all of a sudden be belonging to a common in-group. Mutual dependency fosters harmony. We are social species. Sometimes one cannot win a fight without losing a friend. In order to be successful in society that depends on working together, social animals need to be hawks as well as doves (Waal, 2005).

Subgrouping: Keeping difficult situations from becoming difficult groups

An important task of the facilitator is to keep the group task focused when anxiety rises. Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (2007, 2010b) provide guidelines and techniques on how to facilitate discussions in large groups with up to 100 people based on their long experience in working with large groups. They draw their insights for keeping difficult situations from becoming difficult groups on scientific experiments of two persons. Firstly, the group experi-

ments of psychologist Solomon Asch. Asch showed that so long as each person has an ally, people maintain their independence from group pressure. Secondly, Yvonne Agazarian demonstrated in her research on systems centred therapy for groups that so long as there is a subgroup for every viewpoint and all voices can be heard, the whole group is more likely to keep working on its task. The technique of identifying subgroups of allies for each specific opinion, for instance by asking for the question 'Anyone else who feels this way', is now called 'subgrouping.

Building of a post-event support structure: during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated

Indicators:

- Agreement on a protocol for decision-making
- Learning Fairs or workshops for people throughout the organisation to share what action groups are doing
- Procedure for monitoring of the action plan, for measuring results, progress and communication
- Building of a systematic and stakeholder-oriented evaluation
- Initiation of ongoing communication processes; an information system (such as review meetings, newsletters, website, interactive tools) is designed in cooperation with primary users
- Action groups, implementation planning teams, task forces and other temporary structures are put in place
- Agreement with a champion who promises to continue sponsoring the process, affirming and supporting the normative change
- Circulate ideas from the LGI and invite comments from both attendees and other on specific issues
- Adding representatives to an existing group for new interactions
- Infiltrate agendas of already scheduled meetings both inside and outside the organisation with relevant follow-up from the LGI
- Connection to the existing cycle of policymaking.

Contra-indications to holding the LGI

Indicators:

- Meeting goal is fuzzy or irrelevant to most participants
- People cannot or will not come 100% of the time
- An important stakeholder group is absent
- Design reinforces the existent power relations (an existing group, LGI has to be tailored to an already planned meeting)
- No time or resources to realise the design in a proper way.

13 Afterwards: Evaluation of the effectiveness

This Chapter provides guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of an LSI afterwards. The guidelines concern the effects presented in the category Effectiveness of the Evaluation Table (see Appendix 2). The effectiveness is defined on two levels, following the framework for sustainable change that has been built in Chapter 5: the LSI has been contributing non-sustainable change (short-term or first-order effects), and the LSI has been contributing to sustainable change (long-term or second-order effects).

As in the previous Chapters 11 and 12, for each effect, the observable indicators have been successively summed up, and presented in a highlighted box. Where needed, an effect is clarified and illustrated with examples from the case study and from literature.

Section 13.3 describes the steps to be taken when evaluating a past LSI, using the tools of the Evaluation Instrument, developed in Part 2.

> Note: The Sections 13.1 and 13.2 should be read and used as a Reference Guide, parts are presented as a list rather than a story. To be able to follow the illustrative stories from the case study, it might be necessary to (re)read the thick description of a specific Case, as presented in Chapter 10.

13.1 Short-term effects: LSI contributes to getting more and better work done

> *Non-sustainable effects are transactional; they do not shift the norms, but they may generate potentials, conditions, for sustainable effects of future change processes.*

Short-term objectives are met

Indicators:
- LSI is considered worth the effort
- New structures, strategies, procedures are formulated and/or implemented
- New proposals, wishes, needs and interests introduced/expressed
- More informed decisions
- Coherent and effective collaboration on an issue/problem
- Consensus development among organisations and entities outside the formal structures of any of them
- Increased individual skills
- Controlling inspectors are satisfied.

Case 1: Periodic needs assessments or sustainable change?
Maurits (participant in Case 1 and member of the Central Participation Council (CPC) expresses: "The Board of Governors stated a number of values: commitment, personal leadership, openness, honesty, inspiration, respect. Considering that they have spent a whole year behind closed doors coming up with this stuff, then as far as I am concerned, I have had it. As a CPC member, I had a number of questions……despite their good intentions, they do not know what it is all about. Once again with 20-20 hindsight, as advisors, you must therefore start the consciousness raising process with the Board and the General Director Eric, and establish exactly what these values mean to them. That it is not a one-time thing, unless it is a needs inventory. You must be clear about it. The consciousness-raising process with the Board of Governors and the General Director is essential. And then you add a second risk to the mix: the opportunism of the advisor. This also involves all kinds of considerations, including good intentions. I am not talking about commercial motives, but the idea of 'I need only arrange that session, and the rest will follow'. However, this is far from the truth."

Better implementation
The results of this design method are comparable to the results achieved by traditional design methods, but achieved with greater speed, increased commitment, less pressure on one group to have all the answers (D. Axelrod, 1992, p. 507).

A well-performed LSI has 'essentially by-products', such as increase of trust, awareness, engagement and responsibility of participants. The term 'essentially by-products' was coined by Jon Elster (Gunsteren, 2006), and refers to products you want but cannot enforce; their pursuit is doomed to failure by the pursuit itself. For example: imagine what would happen if you said to participants: "I want you to trust me". Probably you would achieve the opposite.

The results of change interventions are often blurred by other ongoing changes in the organisation and success always has more fathers (Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998). Note that some LSIs do not lead to further action, but this can be a positive achievement because it closes of a blind alley (Granata, 2005; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a).

Success has many fathers
Jan (governor participant in Case 1): "Together with the Board, we reviewed the process and we were very proud of it. The relationship with the parents present was significantly reinforced. It was therefore a great success with regard to marketing and communication, and we are extremely glad that we did not miss it. We certainly found it to have been worth the money, even though it cost a significant amount. On the other hand, if you were to ask us 'Did you know what your clients wanted and could you have used this knowledge to create new policy?', the answer would be 'No'. We did have clues. A few matters resulted from the process, which we are now currently addressing, although you are never exactly sure where the ideas come from. Take the talent campuses at three schools as an example. One school is about to start giving bilingual education, another is going to focus on sport, the third is organising groups for gifted students. This is a direct result of the process – without it the plans would

have been delayed, done differently or would not have been realised at all. Success may have many fathers, but the process certainly contributed.

Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context

Indicators:
- Increased awareness of larger systemic developments
- Discovery of generative themes, emerging patterns of working
- A picture or model for operating in a more coherent, integrated way
- Increased knowledge of work processes
- Common ground for information gathering, education, raising awareness
- Deepened mutual understanding of each other's situation and more respect for other views
- People appreciate the whole and their part in it; more appreciation of the shop floor
- Individuals understand the organisation's objective, they know its strategy, how it is doing and who their customers and competitors are.

Commitment and energy for change, better implementation

Indicators:
- Less barriers, more enthusiasm and support for the change process
- People are committed to do something together, getting diverse interest groups together discussing real issues; action groups are viable
- Players take responsibility for the issue
- Engagement with outcome, better acceptance of conclusions, designs or redesigns
- Increased building of trust enables personal action
- Decreased polarisation.

Less complaining as effect of employee involvement
Thijs, General Director in Case 3: "The impression of the conference that I remember most vividly is the positive outlook of the employees. In previous years, people were just complaining. Before, they avoided the management. This time, they worked together with them."

New relationships, more potential for innovation

Indicators:
- Learning bridges between those in power and other voices, so something new can emerge
- Emotional bond between participants
- New relationships are created, networks are extended.

Unintentional side effects
Marja (facilitator of Case 3) reports an unintended positive side effect: "The process of the LSI is on our website. I receive reactions from people such as 'I'd love to come and work with you, I think that is a great way to work'."

Some elements of LSI are transferred

Indicators:
- Participative follow-up meetings
- People start incorporating some elements of LGI in their own meetings (sitting in circles, using talking stick, inviting 'strangers', working in small groups, more collective visualisations).

Efficiency is increased

Indicators:
- Condensation of work, better alignment, less disturbance
- Better use of resources and knowledge, substantial savings in time and money
- Decreased implementation time.

13.2 Sustainable effects: LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning

Sustainable effects are transformational; they shift the norms in relationships and communication, showing in transformed capability for change and ongoing learning

Collective learning and changing continue, increased capability for change

A meeting succeeds when people do things afterwards that they couldn't or wouldn't do before. A successful method helps a system transform its capability for action. (Marvin Weisbord)

Indicators:
- Use of LSI or other participative approaches is continued, used for other issues or by other people
- Participants learn how to fragment complex problems, how to do their own data-gathering and how to make system models
- Development of capacity to deal with uncertainty and chaotic circumstances
- Deepened dialogue between leaders and the entire organisation/system
- Increased self-organising capacity; empowerment shows in self-management, more distributed leadership
- Improved capacity to work with the principles; increased capacity to cross boundaries of levels and functions; design ideas can come from anyone.

Combining top-down and bottom-up change, making leadership more distributed
During the interview, Thijs, the client in Case 3, repeatedly referred to the theme of 'the combination of top-down structures and bottom-up participation', meaning combining leadership decisions with involvement of the participants in providing the fine details. LSI enables this.
Thijs: "In my experience, you can set specific structures for general matters. Top-down frameworks are best combined with universal participation areas within the structural boundaries. However, you must make the boundaries clear. If you do not do that, then it becomes manipu-

lation. If there is one thing I hate, it is when people make out that your input on particular matters is valued when the management have already decided what is going to happen. I learned that you must make sure the boundaries are clear. These days, leadership is conducted completely differently in our organisation. Leadership is now an organisational matter rather than a management issue.

Kerber & Buono (2005, p. 32) state that change capacity of the organisation refers to:
- The willingness and ability of change makers to assume responsibility for the change
- Existence of a supportive infrastructure that facilitates change
- Sufficient resources appropriate for the change.

Increased reflective self-awareness

Indicators:
- Self-evaluation among leaders is conducted to reflect on progress and required example behaviour
- Discussions with stakeholders on what is working or not are included in meeting agendas
- Reflective questions are asked in meetings, distinctions between lived and spoken beliefs are explored
- Teams learn to review and evaluate their performance
- 'Noise' in the change process is explored and amplified: does it help or hinder the process
- The way of interaction is reflected: time for stopping and reflection is taken

Lasting change
Stephen Garcia (2007, p. 343) points out: "'Lasting change' does not result from plans, blueprints and events. Rather the changes must be appropriated by the participants, and incorporated into their patterns of interaction. It involves a lengthy process, because it is a dynamic process of social influence. It is about a change in people's awareness, outlook and beliefs about the change."

More permeable boundaries: opening up the organisation

Indicators:
- Development of a shared perspective on their own system with stakeholders is continued for other issues
- Cross functional teams have decision-making power, shared decision-making in action teams
- Stakeholder or customer review for input in progress
- Increase of participation of often excluded groups
- Increased ability to work with diversity: relevant diversity is identified and valued, different views are not minimised or discounted

- Microcosm practices continue: large group meetings, deep divers, checkpoints, reunions, action teams.

Symbols of 'opening up the system'
'Opening up the system' can be observed by round tables in meeting rooms, or no tables at all, people sitting in small groups, or 'strangers' are invited to regular meetings.

New structures sustain ongoing participation in change

Indicators:
- Creation of a delivery system to avoid dead zone after short-term success; action groups remain viable
- Shift of policy decisions; leaders are more aware of the need of the ground level to make policies actually work; better balance between top-down and bottom-up decision-making
- Employees are able to influence important organisational decisions concerning their own work, such as work methods, strategy, coordination
- Communities of practice are established, new networks
- Tools learned during the event are used to ensure continued learning
- Ongoing participation in new partnerships and collaborations
- Management systems changed, especially human resource systems, that build and support the new culture
- Progress is monitored, feedback provided, midcourse corrections and directions changed
- Role of Work Councils shifts from participation to helping to organise participation
- Leaders are coached in their roles in the change process.

Better balance of top-down and bottom-up decision-making
Thijs (client in Case 3): "The LSI supports a new role for the Works Council. They no longer participate in decision-making, but monitor that a sufficient level of decision-making has been organised. Their role is more related to the preconditions rather than the content. Because the process was quite lengthy, almost tedious, I would say, and because we now more often organise the decision-making this way, even if it is for processes not as large-scale as this one, people often develop an attitude of 'Come on MT, it's your job to make decisions – hurry up. We're not prepared to sit around twiddling our thumbs again.' That is not always the case, but in my experience, you cannot conduct every process this way – decisions have to be made. Doing an LSI has to be worth the effort."

Some suggestions for how to organise follow-up are:

- Re-contracting might be helpful
- Identify next steps together, during the LGI
- Infiltrate existing meetings
- Utilise social networks of key players
- Organise new LGIs to discuss hot issues.

Communication is more direct and constructive

Indicators:
- Meetings with an 'engagement edge': more efficient, effective and participative
- Shift from one-way to two-way communication between levels and functions
- Unusual or unexpected message approaches to keep awareness high
- Different modalities (play, pictures, interaction technology) are used
- New language that expresses mutual understanding
- Negative feelings expressed in conversations about an issue change from fear or anger to sadness or frustration.

Ordinary meetings change
Dannemiller (1992, p. 492): "Ordinary meetings were also being managed more effectively since the large-scale sessions were held..... They are asking the right people into these meetings…. The people with the right information, not necessarily the right positions."

Risks: possible undesired effects

There are no medicines without side effects. You always have to balance effects and side-effects (Adam Cohen, clinical pharmacologist at the Centre for Human Drug Research in Leiden)

Indicators
- Cynicism and greater resistance to change
- Loss of trust in participative processes
- Apathy, people awaiting further action of leaders to get relief from responsibility
- Frustration about lack of time or resources for follow-up
- Only relatively minor, non-controversial actions are done
- Discouragement among people who were not invited
- Increased power game, increased distrust, decline of open communication
- Collusive climate, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate.

In the preparation phase, possible risks should be discussed. Risks can be lessened when the client fully understands what can come out of an LSI. Elaborate on the issue of voluntary participation, a shared purpose, and the right people in the room.

Drawback of participation
Ans (employee, participant in Case 3): "I realise it is not enough to do just your job, you have to change whenever necessary. However, I work part-time for a good reason: I do not have time for extra work."

13.3 Evaluation procedure and tools, three examples from the case study

An evaluation can serve different needs (Meer & Edelenbos, 2006) such as: accountability, learning and collaboration. The goal of the evaluation should determine how, how profoundly and by whom the evaluation is done. This Section offers a procedure for the most profound form of eval-

uation of a past LSI, as required for instance in an academic research project, using the Evaluation Instrument developed in Part 2. This Evaluation Instrument consists of:

- A set of success factors and effects, with observable indicators
- Methods for evaluating the indicators
- A procedure for using the tools of the instrument
- Tools: the *Audit Matrix* with questions and sources, the *Score Table* to score compliance of the LSI for every indicator, *Score Chart* for the success factors and effects, *Score Chart Overview* to compare several LSIs and a *Table with conclusions on the effectiveness.*

Table 13-1 presents an overview of recommended steps, methods and tools for a profound evaluation of a past LSI.

For all questions, factors and effects in the evaluation instrument, keep in mind: your lead questions are "Did the LSI contribute to…., and was it worth the effort? What were the main success factors?"

Adjusting the depth of the evaluation to suit the objective
To enable profound evaluation for teaching or research objectives, it is essential to play back and listen to the interviews, as this ensures enough time to reflect. Listen, stop the tape, take notes, reflect, and listen again etcetera. Plan about three times the length of the interviews. If the objective is just a rough assessment or test, then it is only necessary to play back the interviews if the notes do not provide enough clarity about a particular factor.

The case study provides three examples of how the Evaluation Instrument can be used for a profound evaluation of past LSIs. The cases are described in Chapter 10; the results of the procedure are presented in Appendix 3.

Expanding the question is important for the return on expectations
What was done very well in cases 1 and 3 was the exploration and expansion of the question, plus the rejection of activities that did not fit in with the approach. In Case 2, this was not done enough, which led to less being done than probably could have been. However, it is sometimes difficult to define success. An Open Space with very little energy and a number of design flaws later showed that it had successfully raised awareness in a difficult situation. Furthermore, opinions can also be divided about the contribution of the LSI. Could more have been done, given the difficult starting situation? Désirée (project manager in Case 2) says in an interview two years after the LSI: "The process was an overall success, but that is not always 100% down to the initial meeting. Did I get what I wanted? I do not think I got everything. About 40-50%." E-mail from Tonnie to Ronald after the evaluation meeting with the planning group, shortly after the Open Space during Case 2: "The goals were achieved, the client was satisfied, but they were not happy with the way in which this was achieved. I do not think it would have worked any other way. I believe I served as somewhat of a lightning conductor, as I supervised the Open Space."

Table 13-1: Procedure with steps, methods and tools for evaluation of a past LSI

Nr.	Steps for evaluation of past LSIs	Methods and Tools
1.	Define a clear focus regarding scope and goal of the evaluation	*See Section 16.4* for examples of evaluation arrangements
2.	Gather information: Plan interviews with key players, ask for relevant documents and observations.	*Use the Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1;* if necessary add or delete columns for interviews with key players
3.	Conduct interviews with key players, record the interview with a voice recorder and make notes	*See interview guidelines of Appendix 3.2 for general set up* *Use the questions of the Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1*
4.	Complete your notes	Listen to the interview recordings; transcribe some interesting quotes
5.	Analyse the texts of notes for success factors and effects	Use text markers of different colours for each of the main categories in success factors and effects (Context/task, Client, Consultant, Intervention, Non-sustainable effects, Sustainable effects), *See Section 6.3 for an example*
6.	Analyse documents for relevant factors and effects	*Use the Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1*
7.	Score the indicators of the factors and effects	*Use the Score Table of Appendix 3.3*
8.	Summarise the scores for success factors and effects on the Score Chart	*Use the Score Chart of Appendix 3.4*
9.	If multiple cases: Make an overview of results	*See example of Appendix 3.7*
10.	Write description of results and conclusions about the effectiveness	*See example in the Table with conclusions on the effectiveness of Appendix 3.8*
11.	Discuss the evaluation with relevant stakeholders	

A major insight, renewed after my years as an auditor of quality management systems, is that common sense and practical reasoning are always leading in an audit/evaluation procedure. As they say in aviation: you have to fly the plane, not the procedures.

Always remember to fly the plane
Pilots live by routines and checklists. They have to. Still they always have to remember that their first task is to fly the plane, no matter what happens. The same is true for an evaluation of LSI.

You have to make decisions in scoring for practical reasons, keeping the goal of the evaluation in mind. Every definition has its own problems. A person may have several hats on, contracts and processes might overlap. Some difficulties that have to be pragmatically solved are for instance:

- What belongs to this LSI? I define the duration of the LSI process by the beginning and end of the contract with the consultant. What to do when there are several contracts at the same time, but with different beginnings and endings? In Case 1 and 2, the LSI was the beginning of a bigger process in the development of an organisation. What belongs to which process? A follow-up assignment can count as a new process, or as an extension or modification of the LSI.
- Who is the Client? Often there are multiple levels of management involved. The project leader is the direct client, but often not the formal responsible person, the one who decides to start or stop the process (Checkland & Scholes, 1990). Sometimes there is a contractor and a sub-contractor. In Case 1 and 2, I was the sub-contractor of the other consultant and in fact he also was my Client.

Beginning and end of an assignment for an LSI
For Case 1 I see my assignment as analysing the outcomes of the LSI and writing a report for the Board as an extension of the LSI, although it was not offered in the initial contract. The marketing support my colleague offered after the LSI in Case 2 was included in the initial contract, but was in fact no part of the LSI, because it was not directed by the planning group anymore, not participative, and was not whole system.

What exactly is the cause of success?
Wiley (Client in Case 2) says about the Open Space conference: “That day, we wanted to transmit the feeling that the reduction in the number of pupils was a problem for the municipality, not just for the Board of Governors. I remember that we did not achieve this goal that morning. Still, it later turned out that the project was an overall success, albeit that that particular morning did not in itself contribute to this success. It was a success because we achieved our goal. We managed to turn around a ten-year negative trend into a positive trend. The approach was very successful, but it is unclear which specific elements brought about success.”

An overview of the scores of the three cases is given in Appendix 3.7. My conclusion is that the more the success factors are met, the more effective the LSI is for sustainable change, and vice versa.

The Practical Guide presents *when and how* an LSI can be effectively used for sustainable organisational change, and how the effectiveness can be evaluated afterwards. In the next Chapter, the main conclusions on the effectiveness of LSI will be summarised, followed by an interpretation for each conclusion, providing a reflection on *why* an LSI works as found.

Part 4: Insights from the research process

14 Why does LSI work? A reflection

The conclusions of this study are summarised and organised in the Practical Guide discussed in the previous chapters. It has become clear *when and how* LSI works. However, *why* does it work? In this Chapter I will use the Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication (see Figure 14-1), to provide answers as to why LSI works. These explanations will be further interpreted and discussed, referring to additional explanatory theories where necessary.

This Chapter starts with an overview of the main explanations on the effectiveness of LSI. For ease of reading, the explanations have been summarised in a list. The order is quite arbitrary though, since all explanations are related to each other, forming a pattern that connects, a pattern this research project was looking for. When constructing this list, I even found it hard to distinguish the main factors from the sub-factors. To structure this Chapter, I have selected the underlined sentences of the conclusion list to serve as Section headers. Each conclusion will be further discussed in the corresponding Section.

14.0 Summary of main conclusions on the effectiveness of LSI

The main explanations and interpretations on the effective use of LSI are:

1. Without doubt, LSI can work as advertised, but the more you neglect the principles, the less effective the LSI will be.

2. The system has to be ready for a participative approach such as LSI. The Natural System (providing trust and safety), and the Social System of rules (providing resources, and minimal structures and rules) have to function well enough.

3. LSI has to be worth the effort. LSI is an intervention with possible high results, however also with high risks.

4. Facilitators have to 'cook with the principles', looking for 'good enough' solutions. A situational approach in change strategy is essential, making a good match between situation, task and design.

5. The 'right people in the room' is one of the most important success factors. The choice of 'the system', which people are invited, is crucial.

6. Expectation management is essential to build and keep trust. Meeting face-to-face long enough is important because we are bodily creatures.

7. Sustainable change has to be sustained. The strength of the LSI, the complex mix that creates the emergence of collective learning, is also its weakness: the conditions have to be continued for sustainable effects.

14.1 The more you neglect the principles, the less effective the LSI

Without doubt, these methods can work as advertised. If all the criteria for success are met, in the ideal LSI, sustainable effects will be noticeable. All the evidence for and against supports this conclusion. Also from the evaluation of three LSIs after two years, it can be concluded that the less the success factors in preconditions, design, and performance were met, the less effective the LSI was. Evaluation research by four students from Tilburg University confirmed this conclusion. Judith Poppelaars (2010), Pieter Adema (2010), and Noortje van de Mortel (2010) evaluated four LSIs, at least one year after the fact. Mark Hummel (2010) assessed the preconditions for LSI concerning four other LSIs. Appendix 6 provides an overview of the evaluation scores, combined with the scores of my three test cases, described in Section 13.3. The more an LSI complies with the success factors, the more the sustainable effects can be observed after one or two years. The less an LSI complies with the success factors, the less the desired effects and the more undesired effects were observed.

The Practical Guide and the Client Information Leaflet have been constructed to help to select the right approach and consultant. Sustainable change means development of communicative self-steering, according to the model of Will, Discipline and Communication. This model explains how and why LSI works. Figure 14-1 shows how the working elements of LSI, condensed to the main aspects, contribute to development of capacities. The model structure is used to explain where the working elements of LSI fit and why they work. The relational aspects of the LSI are part of the Natural System, the procedural aspects belong to the Social System, and the communicative aspects are part of the Communicative self-steering System. All aspects are important in reaching sustainable effects.

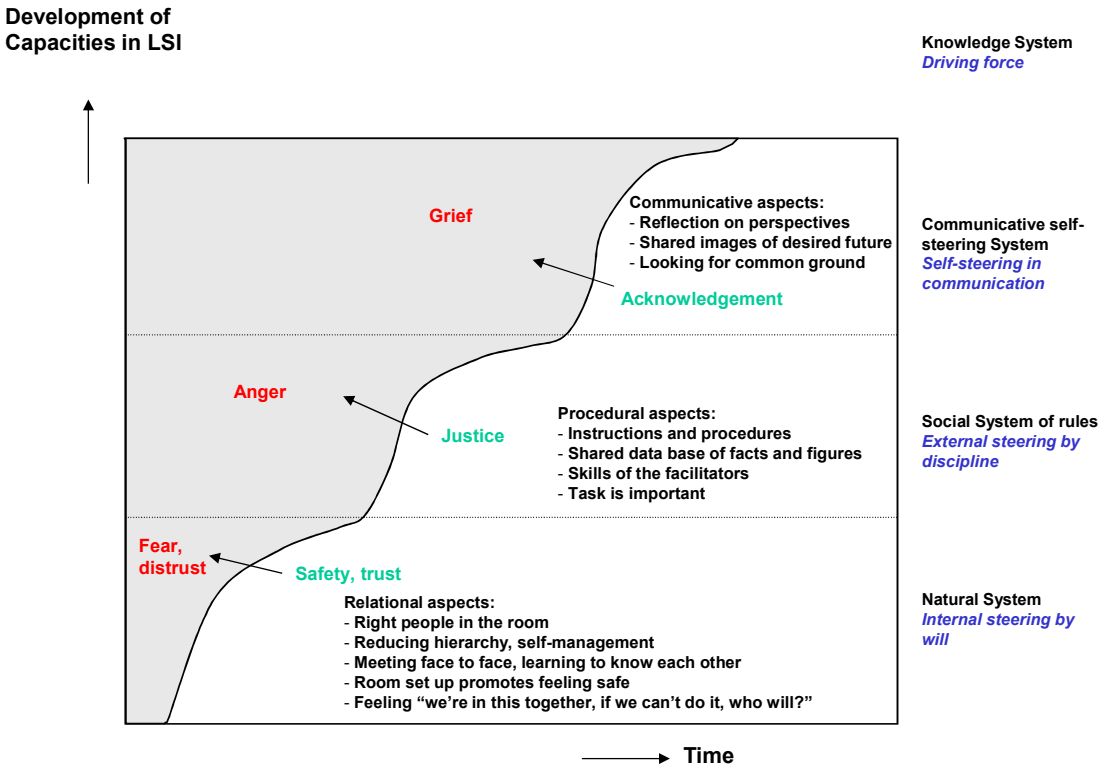


Figure 14-1: How aspects of LSI contribute to development of capacities

Figure 14-1 also explains the meaning of perceived emotions during an LSI. Emotions are diagnostic signs, they are indicators of success factors being in place or not. Distrust for instance means something is wrong with factors on the relational level.

The more building blocks you leave out, the weaker the building will be. "No one facet of large-group method in particular is a critical prerequisite for the successful outcomes of these interventions. Instead, it is the interaction of multiple elements within the 'symphony' of a large-group method that all work together toward the change in human and organisational systems." (Shmulyian, et al., 2010, p. 224). The web of characteristics of LSI presented in Figure 4-3 in Section 4.3 reflects the interconnectedness of the success factors.

Example of leaving out building blocks: Mixed-mode conferences
Merrelyn Emery states (1992, p. 524): "Mixed-mode conferences and Design Principle I conferences are especially vulnerable to dysfunction as described by Bion (1952 , 1961). Group dynamics such as dependency, fight/flight and pairing occur. Mixed-mode conferences have formal chaired presentations, followed by discussion groups. They are basically participative events interspersed with short talks."

If all the criteria for success are met, following the Practical Guide and the Client Information Leaflet for effective use of LSI, sustainable effects will be noticeable. This shows in:

- Collective learning and increased capacity for change
- Increased reflective self-awareness
- More permeable boundaries: opening up the organisation, inviting diversity; focus on how good the system is; more systemic thinking
- New structures sustain ongoing participation in change
- Communication is more direct and constructive.

In the next Sections, relevant aspects of the model of Will, Discipline, and Communication will be further used to explain how LSI operates as integrator of the double steering forces of the Natural System and the Social System.

14.2 The system has to be ready for a participative approach such as LSI

If an LSI serves as catalyst, there has to be a process to catalyse, to work in. The situation has to be ripe enough. Then again, LSI can also work to ripen the situation. However, there have to be a few 'mature enough' people who operate from the Communicative self-steering System. They operate as 'pockets of innovation' (Weisbord, 2004a, p. 337), in order to help the system 'un-double'.

Marvin Weisbord on why a Future Search works (interview, 27 August 2008): "People who catch on to the fact that they really can have people be more responsible for themselves, without having to put much pressure into the system, are people who already have that value in their sight, but never knew it was possible. These folks say 'Future Search really changed the way I work, I feel freer now'. That is because that is their natural inclination. They just did not know how to do it. As if they give themselves permission to be who they really are, because there is a lot of pressure in the management business world to do things a certain way, that does not meet everybody's needs."

There have to be some individuals who have developed qualities of communicative self-steering (collaborative leadership, reflection capacities and skills for containing anxiety and communication skills) for the collective level of communicative self-steering to unfold. Leaders have to support the participative approach and be willing and able to take stakeholders seriously. LSI looks for common ground for further action (not consensus). Focusing on the larger process of LSI enables combination of top-down and bottom-up actions, but do not choose LSI if you do not want to collaborate.

14.3 LSI has to be worth the effort: in fragmented situations for important tasks

LSI is an approach with high-potential rewards in complex, fragmented, or uncertain situations, when the task is important to stakeholders. LSI is meant for complex issues and tasks, which no existing group can do alone. This is not therefore about the domain of rules and procedures for

manufacturing, teambuilding, etcetera. Among others, Jeff Conklin calls these types of issues 'wicked problems', as opposed to 'tame problems'. Table 14-1 compares these two types of problems.

Table 14-1: Wicked problems compared to tame problems (Conklin, 2006)

Tame problem	**Wicked problem**
Has a well-defined and stable problem statement	Has no clear definition, is changing over time; you do not understand the problem until you have developed a solution
Has a definite stopping point, i.e. when the solution is reached	Has no stopping rule. There is no definitive solution, a 'good enough' solution is reached given the available resources of time, money and energy
Has a solution which can be objectively evaluated as right or wrong	Solutions are not right or wrong. Judgements will vary depending on the stakeholders
Belongs to a class of similar problems which are all solved in the same similar way	Is essentially unique and novel. Many factors and conditions, all embedded in a dynamic social context.
Has solutions which can be easily tried and abandoned	Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot' operation
Comes with a limited set of alternative solutions	Has no given alternative solutions
Tame does not mean simple or easy, but the problem can be solved with a linear process. Examples: - Finding the shortcut route from A to B on a map - Repairing a computer.	Examples: - What makes good schools? - How to get more power for development of our libraries?

When there is no definite description of 'the problem', there is likely also no definite 'the solution'. There is no stopping rule. The problem solving ends when you run out of resources, such as time, money, or energy. You therefore stop when you have a solution that is 'good enough'. Herbert Simon, Nobel laureate in Economics, called this 'satisficing' (Conklin, 2006, p. 14). If LSI is used for 'wicked problems', then there is no 'best solution' or an unambiguous defined result. If there is no stopping rule, the task is never finished. This implies that commitment and understanding are conditions to keep going. Even if the effects seem like 'small wins', they form important steps on the way to 'good enough' solutions (Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001).

Viewed from the model of Will, Discipline, and Communication, 'Tame Problems' can be solved with interventions in the Natural System, or in the Social System of rules. Tame problems ask for more information. 'Wicked Problems' are caused by confusion, they ask for different information, for fresh eyes through interventions in the Communicative self-steering system. For application of

LSI, this implies: stakeholder involvement, divergence-convergence, looking for common ground and good enough solutions, no stopping rule, and expectation management is important for matching ambition and resources. Most problems have degrees of wickedness: parts can be solved in a linear process (think of extra budget for maintenance of school buildings in Case 1). However, social complexity also fragments meaning. Key terms and concepts are used in different ways by the different stakeholders (Conklin, 2006, p. 35). Because of social complexity, solving a wicked problem is fundamentally a social process. Having a few brilliant people or the latest project management technology is no longer sufficient (Conklin, 2006). LSI offers guidelines on how to organise this social process.

14.4 Facilitators have to 'cook with the principles', looking for 'good enough' solutions

Say No if you want your Yes to mean something (Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff)

A situational approach in change strategy is essential, making a good match between situation, task, and design. This is easier said than done, since LSI is a complex intervention, recommended especially for complex problems and situations. This requires skilled facilitators (consultants). Their repertoire has to be broader than specific Large Group Methods, to make and keep this match. The feasibility of the goals and actions of the LSI is an important and ongoing point of discussion. The role of the facilitator is 'hands-off', stimulating self-management of stakeholders, not 'hands-on' as in training, teambuilding, coaching, or teaching. However, the consultant has to educate the client and stakeholders concerning the principles and methods.

Organisational change is not only about the intangible factors of change, the human factors (J. D. Adams, 2003), nor is it about the restructuring or improvement of procedures. It is about paying attention to the three knowledge systems of the Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication.

Unity in diversity: agree to disagree

Communicative self-steering is expressed by what you say No to (Cornelis, 1993). Saying No implies letting go of what is not really important, and focusing completely on what really matters. (Revel & Richard, 1998; Weisbord, 2004a). I refer to this as 'good enough' and perfect expectation management.

A facilitator has to match time-design-expectations with the possibilities of the specific situation. Is it possible to reach the goals in the available time?

Situational change approach
"Successful change efforts seem to be those where strategic choices regarding the speed of the effort, the amount of preplanning, the involvement of others, and the relative emphases they will give to different approaches to deal with resistance, are both internally consistent and fit some key situational variables." (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979, p. 9).

Focus on the bigger process

The metaphor presenting Large Group Interventions as a fire (Königswieser & Keil, 2000) also applies to the bigger LSI process. You can warm yourself at the fire, but when you are careless, you can get seriously burned. LSI requires skilled facilitators, with a repertoire beyond specific LGI methods. In Figure 14-2, I relate the repertoire of roles of the facilitator to the model of Will, Discipline, and Communication.

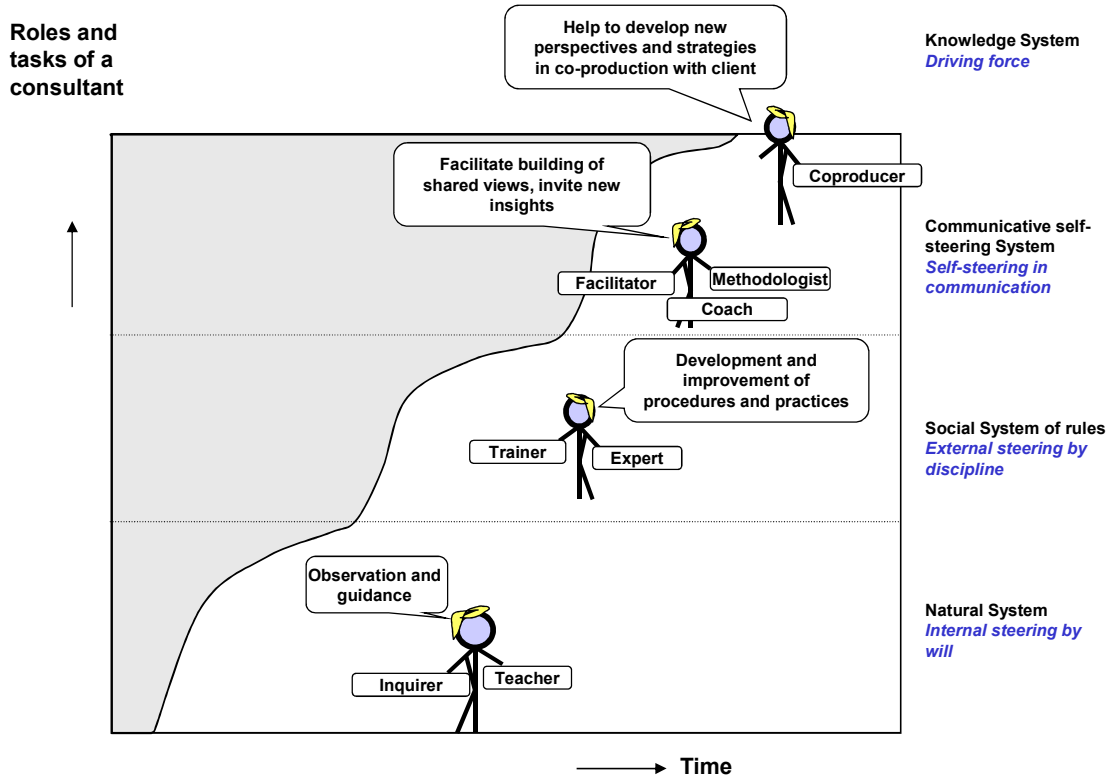


Figure 14-2: Roles and tasks of consultants/facilitators in the three knowledge systems of the Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication (Zouwen, 2010a)

This figure shows how in the Natural System the role of the consultant/facilitator concentrates on making observations and guidance of will power to grow. Interventions in the Natural System require the role of the consultant to be inquirer or teacher. In the Social System of rules, the role of the consultant focuses on development and improvement of procedures and practices, stimulating disciplined action and skills. Interventions in the Social System of rules ask for a trainer or expert role. In the Communicative self-steering System, the consultant facilitates building of shared views, invites new insights and helps to develop new perspectives and strategies in co-production

with the client. For interventions that develop the Communicative self-steering System, the consultant fulfils the role of facilitator, coach, methodologist, or co-producer.

The role of a facilitator can be seen as a midwife in a pregnancy process called LSI. This metaphor of a facilitator as a 'midwife' implies that the system is pregnant with something to be liberated by birth. The midwife helps facilitate the pregnancy and labour. The newborn has to be nursed and fed well in order to grow; a facilitator helps to deliver something that is already present. Arnold Cornelis (1993) calls this the un-doubling of systems, or catharsis.

14.5 The right people have to be in the room

Deciding who should be involved, how, and when in doing stakeholder analyses is a key strategic choice, one in which both the devil and the angels are in the details (John Bryson)

Is the answer in the room? Can professional expertise be beaten by the wisdom of the crowd?

The choice of 'the system', and which people are invited, is crucial for defragmentation, while paying attention to the issues and to the people that are not 'in the room'. Who the right people are has to be filled in for the specific situation and LGI method used.

The task determines what the system is. For me many questions boil down to the basic question "What is the organisation, what is the system?" Basically, it is the facilitator's and client's choice. Systems theory teaches us that the system is not the same as the organisation. Environment plays a role, but what the environment is depends on the task. Task is not the same as strategy.

The wisdom of crowds
James Surowiecki (2005, p. xiii) states: ".. under the right circumstances, groups are remarkably intelligent, and are often smarter than the smartest people in them. Groups do not need to be dominated by exceptionally intelligent people in order to be smart. Even if most of the people within a group are not especially well informed or rational, it can still reach a collectively wise decision. This is a good thing, since human beings are not perfectly designed decision-makers. We have limited foresight into the future. Most of us lack the ability - and the desire - to make sophisticated cost-benefit calculations. Instead of insisting on finding the best possible decision, we will often accept one that seems good enough. And we often let emotion affect our judgment. Yet despite all these limitations, when our imperfect judgments are aggregated in the right way, our collective intelligence is often excellent." This intelligence is what Surowiecki calls 'the wisdom of crowds'.

Relations are central in sensemaking: it is not about sharing values, but about collective action

If people want to share meaning, then they need to talk about their shared experience in close proximity to its occurrence and hammer out a common way to encode it and talk about it. They need to see their joint sayings about the experience to learn what they jointly think happened. (Karl Weick)

In LSI, relationship to the task and collectively working on this task are front and centre, not individuals or groups. A working element of the LGI is that participants are enabled to reflect on their situation (Boos & Königswieser, 2000). They must feel secure enough that this is not a new, subtle

manipulation technique. If the large group meeting offers a safe enough environment and the work in small groups has not been more regulated than strictly necessary, according to Stacey (2003) participants have the chance of discussing the shadow themes in a more or less organised coffee break. In the design of the LGI methods World Café and Open Space, this working element gets strong emphasis.

Shared meaning is not what is crucial for collective action, but rather it is the experience of the collective action that is shared (Weick, 1995, p. 42).

What is Sensemaking? Wikipedia 17 March 2010 (text copy, citations are not in the reference list)
Klein et al. (2006b) have presented a theory of sensemaking as a set of processes that is initiated when an individual or organisation recognises the inadequacy of their current understanding of events. Sensemaking is an active two-way process of fitting data into a frame (mental model) and fitting a frame around the data. Neither data nor frame comes first; data evoke frames and frames select and connect data. When there is no adequate fit, the data may be reconsidered or an existing frame may be revised. This description resembles the Recognition-Metacognition model (Cohen et al. 1996), which describes the metacognitive processes that are used by individuals to build, verify, and modify working models (or 'stories') in situational awareness to account for an unrecognised situation. (Such notions also echo the processes of assimilation and accommodation in Piaget's (1972, 1977) theory of cognitive development.

Stacey states (2005, p. 350): "Only when people talk differently to each other will an organisation change. Change in the behaviour of a group is the same phenomenon as change in the behaviour of an individual. It is not about sharing values but about relating. Themes of the wider group resonate in relationships."

Individual and group are two sides of the same coin
Individual and group define each other, they are two sides of the same coin. Grieten, Lambrechts & Corthouts (2006) state that it is not primarily the LGI as a method that is important, in essence it is the quality of relation and condition created before, during and after the LGI that is of decisive importance for success of the change process.
Maturana & Varela (1987, p. 171) express: "All behaviour is a relational phenomenon that we, as observers, witness between organisms and environment. Animal and environment are two sides of the same coin; knower and known are mutually specified."

Weick (1993, p. 645) points out that structuring consists of two patterns and the relationships between them. The first pattern or informal structure or social construction consists of interaction patterns that stabilise meaning by creating shared interpretive schemes, giving shared meaning. The second pattern refers to a framework of roles, rules, procedures, configured activities, and authority relations that reflect and facilitate meanings. Meanings affect frameworks, which affect meaning. The first pattern of meaning belongs in the Natural System; the second pattern of the framework belongs in the Social System of rules.

In an LSI, the task structures the relations. Relationships are rooted in collective action, implying that you do not have to know each other to be able to work together constructively, as long as the task stays constant and the environment remains stable (Weick, 1993).

Non-disclosive intimacy
Weick refers to the principle that people do not have to know each other to be able to work together as Eisenberg's social form of 'Non-disclosive intimacy' (Weick, 1993, p. 647). A Large Group Intervention can be seen as a 'non-disclosive intimacy". Relationships are rooted in collective action that stresses:
- Coordination of action over alignment of cognitions
- Mutual respect over agreement
- Trust over empathy
- Diversity over homogeneity
- Loose over tight
- Strategic communication over unrestricted conversation.

For an LSI to succeed, there has to be a clear task, the task defines the borders of the system, and the key players in the system are to be invited as participants.

14.6 Meeting face-to-face long enough is important because we are bodily creatures

Biology holds us 'on a leash', and will let us stray only so far from who we are. We can design our life any way we want, but whether we will thrive depends on how well the life fits human predispositions (Edward Wilson)

We are bodily creatures. Bodies matter when building trust, meeting face-to-face long enough is important for building and maintaining trust for collective action. Frans de Waal states (Waal, 2005, p. 221): "On top of the inherent duality of human nature comes the role of intelligence. Even if we customarily overestimate our rationality, there is no denying that human behaviour is an ambition of drive and intelligence. We exert little control over ancient urges for power, sex, safety, and food, but we habitually weigh the pros and cons of our actions before we engage in them. Human behavior is seriously modified by experience."

Weisbord (2004a, p. 5) describes his insight that each one of us has the potential for both managerial behaviour and responsible behaviour according to the 'theory X and theory Y' of McGregor (1960): "Theory X assumes that we are lazy, irresponsible, passive, and dependent, so we need tight control and supervising. Theory Y assumes that most people will take responsibility, care about their jobs, and wish to grow and achieve and, given a chance, do excellent work. We cannot change our assumptions the way we change underskirts. To do that is to surrender part of my own identity."

The Natural System contains the implicit rules we inherited from our biological ancestors and steered by our culture as social beings and our biological body. We share large parts with our relatives the apes (Waal, 2005)). Frans de Waal calls human nature a Janus head. We are the product

of opposite forces, such as the need to think of our own interests and the need to get along. Our internal drive, internal steering of the Natural System, has to be balanced by external steering of the Social System. We are full of 'tamed contradictions'. We are bodily creatures. Our body cannot be separated from our thinking and acting, we cannot escape our bodily limits, only extend them by computers and instruments. We shift boundaries, only to see our limits have expanded too. The connection to LSI is that we are free to choose within limits. Our change strategy depends on the situation and the goal, knowing that a goal is a threefold hypothesis (Cornelis, 1993).

Frans de Waal says about our limited freedom to choose (2005, p. 234): "We are stuck with a human psychology shaped by millions of years of life in small communities so that we somehow need to structure the world around us in a way recognizable to this psychology. Empathy is the one weapon in the human repertoire able to rid us of the curse of xenophobia. If we could manage to see people on other continents as part of us, drawing them into our circle of reciprocity and empathy, we would be building upon, rather than going against, our nature." As stated in Chapter 5, the Natural System and our feelings play an important role in sensemaking. I agree with Frans de Waal that a large part of our behaviour is subconscious. The intervention of the 'whole system in the room meeting' for understanding the whole and looking for new meaning requires a long enough face-to-face meeting.

The expressions of people get under our skin
Frans de Waal (2005, p. 188): "We're exquisitely attuned to the stream of emotional signals coming from other people's faces and postures, and we resonate with expressions of our own. Actual people get under our skin in a way that an abstract problem never will. "

Dialogue does not play the central role in the Practical Guide for LSI, but (inter-)action does. This is a logical consequence seen from the Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication. Dialogue places the individual central, while according to this Logic, knowledge is developed in interaction, in relations between individuals. Dialogue is important, but our bodily and social aspects as well. Language is important, but the first place must be given to the non-verbal body language, not to text.

Part of our behaviour is 'hardwired', resulting in fully automated processes that we are not conscious of. If we try to suppress or control them, we have great difficulty or it is simply impossible. We react to subtle signs (Hall, 1984), we mimic the behaviour of others, we connect with those around us and resonate emotionally (Cornelis, 1993; Hall, 1984). Social animals relate to each other at a level far more basic than scientists previously suspected. We are hardwired to connect and resonate emotionally (Waal, 2005).

We are bodily creatures
Frans de Waal (2005, p. 188): "The reality is that we are bodies born from other bodies, bodies feeding other bodies, bodies having sex with other bodies, bodies seeking a shoulder to lean or cry on, bodies travelling long distances to be close to other bodies, and so on. Would life be worth living without these connections and the emotions they arouse? How happy would we be, especially given that happiness, too, is an emotion? ….(2005, p.188) "Bodies matter, which is why anything relating to them arouses emotions."

Feelings play an important role in looking for common ground. Frans de Waal states (Waal, 2005, p. 187): “Without emotions we would barely know which life choices to make, because choices are based on preferences, and preferences are ultimately emotional. Without emotions we wouldn’t store memories, because it’s the emotions that make them salient.”

Karl Weick stresses the retrospective and feeling based character of giving meaning. We use a feeling-based memory to solve a current cognitive puzzle (Weick, 1995, p.43). Our feelings make us decide whether we agree with something. That is why we, semi-unconsciously, use models for testing. The meaning is only given to an event afterwards. For this reason, intentions are adjusted afterwards. Cornelis (1993) calls an intention a three-part hypothesis, because it is based on three assumptions:

1. We know the consequences of our actions in advance
2. A particular method or way of acting is effective for reaching the purpose
3. When the purpose is reached, it will still be what we want.

The question of whether something was the intention is a *post hoc* decision. Self-steering thus becomes a learning process in which the objective must be seen at the same time, while it can only be determined after the fact.

Meeting differently under temporarily defragmented conditions is an important working element in the Large Group Interventions and in the bigger LSI process. Relations are central to building trust and for finding common ground for joined action. However, in a group both cooperation and competition dynamics play a role. They will have to be balanced, meaning a good enough holding of anxiety (Stacey, 2003, p. 378), and for finding common ground.

14.7 Sustainable change has to be sustained

The paradox of planned follow-up and sustainable change

Practitioners of all Large Group Methods struggle with maintaining momentum after the event (Eoyang & Quade, 2006). One-time events can lead to cynicism and greater resistance to change. The more successful an event, the more urgent the long-term task of creating new ways of working (Bunker & Alban, 2006, p. 44). Sustaining the momentum after the LGI is essential (Eijbergen, et al., 2007; Schruijer, 2006). Gilmore & Bing (2006) emphasise that the post-event strategy must be developed *before* the event.

Harrison Owen (2008, p. 84) refers to the work of biologist Stuart Kauffman (1995), who said that all human systems are self-organising and naturally tend toward high performance provided the essential preconditions are present and sustained. The essential preconditions, according to Kauffman are as follows (Owen, 2008, p. 89):

- A relatively safe, nutrient environment
- Diversity of elements

- Complexity of connection
- Search for fitness
- Sparse prior connections
- Being at the edge of chaos.

Harrison Owen (2008) emphasises that self-organisation is the driving force of the universe. That is why Open Space Technology (OST) works in every culture and context in the same way. If you have seen one OS, you have seen them all. "Self-organisation drives inexorably toward High Performance which is the realization of the Search for Fitness." (2008, p. 89). OST operates at the edge of chaos. It has high levels of passion and (potential) conflict. OST also works in large bureaucratic organisations. Why? Because the setting reduces hierarchy and prior connections, and current patterns, are disintegrated. In OST and World Café, people sit where they choose or where there is space, in a circle or in small table groups. In RTSC and FS, a large part of the work is done in maxmix small groups.

Glenda Eoyang and Kristine Quade (2006) have studied the way complexity influences operations of Open Space, Future Search, and Whole Scale Change (Real Time Strategic Change). They have identified three fundamental conditions required for self-organising systems, presented in their CDE model:

1. A *Container* that holds the separate individuals long enough for a pattern to emerge. Containers are critical in LGIs: the place, the convening question, and the time frame determine whether something interesting happens.
2. The *Container* has significant *Differences*: diversity of participants in the room of the LGI, in levels in expertise and power, experiences, perceptions, and values
3. Transforming *Exchanges*: the mode of interaction in the LGI builds connections across significant differences, through working with mixed small groups, microcosm representation, etcetera.

There is no consensus about planning of follow-up beforehand and the role of the consultant in the follow-up. Advocates of planning follow-ups state that this effort should be built into the contract beforehand. The whole LSI and the follow-up should be embedded in a continuous development vision. Possibilities for follow-up should be discussed beforehand. Opponents of planning follow-up state that the LSI itself is the change, a turning point. If people are empowered, they will take responsibility and organise the follow-up themselves. LSI is continual learning and if clients learn from the LGI to move gracefully into the next moment, change will continue.

Event or process?
Marvin Weisbord (Weisbord & Janoff, 2007, p. 9): "I would rather put the energy that goes into debating processes versus events into real work. The real work is planning and running the best meeting you are capable of running, every single time, with as many of the right people as you can squeeze in. Do such events periodically with intention, and, voila, you have a process."

An organisation strategy or culture may be unsustainable as it celebrates the material well-being of a few while short-changing the rest, because it denies the basic solidarity that makes life bearable (Waal, 2005, p. 232). LSI enables the balance between top-down and bottom-up change, where neither pure top-down, nor pure bottom-up change will do it (Hasle, Kristensen, Møller, & Olesen, 2007; Hasle & Møller, 2007; Pedler, et al., 2003; Weisbord, 2004a). The challenge is to find the balance.

However, we should be modest about the duration of sustainable change. Marvin Weisbord selected ten past projects and revisited them 15 to 30 years later. He considers the ten projects a good cross-section of the 100 or so workplace projects he had done (Weisbord 2004a, p. 457). Each of the projects involved one to three years of effort with committed clients, bringing a high potential for 'sustainable change'. Some of them stayed successful for a long time, others were sold, closed or merged by then. His conclusion: "You have to repeat the formula (include more people, help them to look at the whole before fixing any parts, focus on shared aspirations rather than problems, set it up so people can control and coordinate their work, ed.) and you get a high order of systems change. Do this daily for as long as you can, and you have 'built in' continuity until the environment says 'enough'." It made me realize sustainable change is a verb, not a noun. You try to create the system you believe in every day, while staying modest about the changeability of work systems.

If the special conditions are not continued after the LSI, the effects will be non-sustainable, because the dominant logic of the organisation will push back to the old situation. Sustainable change has to be sustained. Continuously.

14.8 To conclude: The strengths of LSI form also its weaknesses

The same factors that make LSI a suitable approach sometimes mess up the process. Success is never guaranteed. I see the following as the key element of the LSI approach: it takes people seriously as a people rather than as human resources (or such like). However, one must do this genuinely. It is not a trick. The emphasis must not be on participation for participation's sake, but on the importance and the usability of everybody's contributions.

Blame consultants for resistance to change?
Pedler et al. express (2003, p. 30): "Most theories, models and definitions of leadership proceed from the assumption that leadership is about getting people to do something. Many leaders see it as their job to introduce change, and in recent times have restructured, reengineered, de-layered, downsized, right-sized, outsourced, run quality initiatives, won service awards, invested in people and empowered their staff. ….As a result, many organisations have endured wave after wave of change initiatives. Yet, at the same time, research indicates that most of these change initiatives fail. This is often attributed to 'resistance to change', but these packaged approaches may be rejected because people do not see that they add any value in terms of the effectiveness and satisfaction at work. …Some of the blame for this quest for the quick fix can be laid at the doors of consultants…"

Managing expectations of client and planning group is crucial

It proves difficult to link cause and effect in an LSI. Success has many fathers, and furthermore, cause and effect are difficult to separate in mutually dependent situations (Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998). The answer as to whether LSI was the right choice depends on whom you are asking. The goals can be reached and yet people can still be dissatisfied with the process.

My conclusion is that managing the expectations of the client and planning group is the most crucial factor. What is possible with a particular degree of interaction, given the circumstances and the available resources? And is that what you want? LSI is a wonderful approach, but you have to apply it carefully and sparingly.

LSI helps to develop communicative self-steering

I do not see LSI as a new 'paradigm' for organisational change, rather I would like to speak of a specific discourse, asking and answering different questions. The Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication shows that each layer of our world has its own discourse, expressed in specific types of feeling. LSI is concerned with development of self-management, images of a desirable future, reflection on procedures and structures, and communication across boundaries of disciplines and functions. Those features are all typical for the development of the system of communicative self-steering, the upper layer in Figure 14-1.

The very first condition for LSI is that the task has to be worth the effort

LSI is characterised by placing the task front and centre. This is a strength and a liability. The system, the participating stakeholders, and what is excluded as 'environment', are defined by the task or issue. In practice, every participant is already involved in many tasks and part of many 'systems'. Each person has to divide his attention, time and energy. This stresses the very first condition for LSI: the task has to be worth the effort. It is essential that meetings with large groups be worth the trouble.

15 Research on interventions for organisational change: Lessons learned

An explorer can never know what he is exploring until after it has been explored (Gregory Bateson)

The research journey has almost come to an end. Whereas Chapter 14 focused on conclusions and insights on LSI as a change approach, this Chapter will reflect on the research process itself. The choice of a process following Naturalistic Inquiry implied that the path was laid while walking. So how well are the research questions answered? What lessons can be learned for further research on interventions for organisational change? I am reminded of the words of Ralph Stablein (2006), in my attempt to survey the breadth and depth of the effectiveness of LSI, much has been lost. A way of seeing is always a way of not seeing (Wolcott, 2001, pp. 89-90). What do I offer in defence of this exercise? Advantages and limitations of the research process will be critically discussed, leading to recommendations for further research on LSI and other participative interventions for organisation change. The perils of Evidence Based Consultancy and the use of a Practical Guide and Client Information Leaflet will follow in Chapter 16.

15.1 Looking back on the journey: Rigour and imagination in intervention research

Constraints of the Naturalistic Inquiry into LSI practice

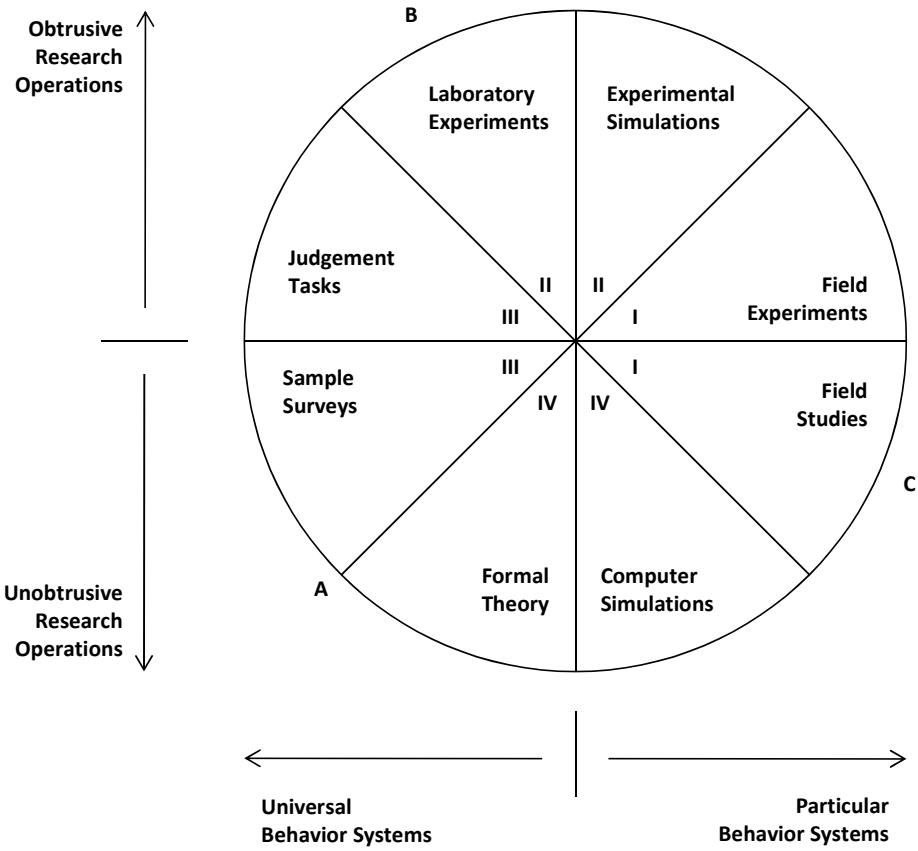
Every research strategy has its own strengths and weaknesses, simply caused by the choices made. Every decision leads to something left out, causing a dilemma. According to the classification of research strategies by McGrath (1982), the Naturalistic Inquiry I performed belongs to the class of *Field Studies*, focusing on a *Particular Behavior System* (LSI practice) and using relatively *Unobtrusive Research Operations* (exploration, evaluation after the fact), shown in Figure 15-1. This means the point of maximum concern lies with *the system character of context*. McGrath distinguishes three major desiderata:

A. Generalizability with regard to population

B. Precision with regard to measurement, manipulation, and control of behaviour variables

C. Realism for the participants, of the context within which behaviours are observed.

All research evidence involves some population (here, A, for Actor), doing something (here, B, for Behavior) in some time/place thing setting (here, C, for Context). It is always desirable (ceteris paribus) to maximise the three desiderata. In Figure 15-1, the maxima for A, B, and C are shown at widely spaced points in the strategy circle (McGrath, 1982, p. 74).



I. Settings in natural systems.
II. Contrived and created settings.
III. Behavior not setting dependent.
IV. No observation of behavior required.

A. Point of maximum concern with generality over actors.
B. Point of maximum concern with precision of measurement of behavior.
C. Point of maximum concern with system character of context.

Figure 15-1: Research Strategies and their points of maximum concern (McGrath, 1982, p. 73)

McGrath states (1982, p. 74): "It is never possible to maximize all three desiderata, since they are conflicting. The very choices and operations by which one can seek to maximize any one of these will reduce the other two; and the choices that would 'optimize' on any two will minimize on the third. Thus, the research strategy domain is a three-horned dilemma, and every research strategy either avoids two horns by an uneasy compromise but gets impaled, to the hilt, on the third horn; or it grabs the dilemma boldly by one horn, maximising on it, but at the same time 'sitting down' (with some pain) on the other two horns."

A Field Study seizes the horn of 'realism of context for participants' boldly, but has to sit upon relatively uncomfortable levels of generalisebility and precision of measurement.

> **Dilemmatics of McGrath**
> McGrath stresses in his Study of Research Choices and Dilemmas (McGrath, 1982, p. 70, italics by McGrath): "*All research strategies and methods are seriously flawed*, often with their very strengths in regard to one desideratum functioning as serious weaknesses in regard to other, equally important, goals. Indeed, *it is not possible, in principle, to do 'good'* (that is, methodologically sound) research. And, of course, to do good research, *in practice*, is even harder than that. (We are a very long way from converting 'dilemmatics' into 'dilemmetrics', much less into a full-fledged 'dilemmatology.' And there is no 'dilemmagic' that will make the problems go away!)"

Because qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst. The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analyses – a scientific two-edged sword. Because the researcher is the instrument in data collection and the centre of the data analysis, the credibility is dependent on the credibility of the researcher (Patton, 2001). I tried to compensate for this weakness by applying the techniques as presented in Figure 3-3, and discussed in Section 3.6. For future research and evaluations on LSI, I recommend working with an audit team, to compensate for personal biases.

My creativity in combining methods made it difficult to classify my research in terms of current academic taxonomy. I was forced to make extensive descriptions of my choices and compare methods to the 'official' ones, such as Grounded Theory. My approach differs from Grounded Theory (GT) in that both data gathering and data analysis were framework driven. In fact, the framework served as pre-given theory. As in GT, data and evolving theory are constantly compared and contrasted throughout the data collection and analytical process. The result of this fluid movement between theory and data is a reconceptualization, often based on a creative leap (Isabella, 1990, p. 12). The evolving theory is an improved 'model' of LSI, as 'solidified' in the Practical Guide. Other similarities with GT are the building of sensitising concepts of success factors and effects, conducting member checks and analysis of member check outcomes.

15.2 It takes a biologist to integrate disciplines?

Do not cower before theory….but do track the roots of your thinking about the problem you are investigating, its significance, and its complexity (Harry Wolcott)

Working multi-disciplinarily to deal with fragmented situations

In the research journey, we made a path through theories from a variety of disciplines:

- Biology and evaluation theory (Bateson, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Maturana & Varela, 1992; Varela, et al., 1991; Waal, 2005)
- Gestalt Psychology (Stacey, 2003; Weisbord, 2004a)

- Social Psychology (Schruijer, 2001, 2004; Weick, 1995; Stacey, 2003)
- Epistemology, Cybernetics (Bateson, 2002; Cornelis, 1993)
- Cultural Anthropology (Hall, 1984; Waal, 2005; Wolcott, 2001)
- Organisation Studies (Boonstra, 2004; Conklin, 2005; Geurts et al., 2007; Stacey, 2003)
- Complexity Theory (Bohm, 1980; Eoyang & Quade, 2006; Stacey, 2003)
- Systems Theory (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Senge, 1990; Stacey, 2003; Vennix, 1996)
- Physics (Bateson, 2002; Bohm, 1980; Zohar, 1997)
- Economy (J. Gray, 2009)
- Linguistics (Chia, 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Stacey, 2003).

John Gray (2009, p. 106) emphasises the necessity for throwing off the constraints of your role by switching disciplines so as to gain freedom and allow for original thoughts to emerge. That is what I did. However, I did not give up biology, but went on to practice it in another way.

Leaving one's disciplinary home is not without danger. One may well lose certain rights and privileges, or may be rejected by all disciplines (Bateson, 2002). The knowledge theory of Arnold Cornelis, the fundament of my model the Logic of Will, Discipline, and Communication, is not widely known. I think for the same reason as for the relative incomprehension Gregory Bateson has suffered. Cornelis based his theory for a large part on the work of Bateson. Both men were sophisticated and complex thinkers. As Alfonso Montuori says in his introduction to the book 'Mind and Nature' (Bateson, 2002, p. xvi), their work matured into a 'science whose special interest is the combining of pieces of information', pointing us to 'patterns that connect'. I think that is a form of defragmentation we need in an increasingly complex and fragmented world. The interest of their theories lies in their addressing the very way we think and deal with issues, beyond a particular discipline, beyond the sciences and humanities. This relates to LSI, as an approach that strives to deal with issues beyond disciplines, functions, and 'our kind of people'. LSI works because people work on important issues in a (temporarily) defragmented setting. LSI itself is based on a web of principles, developed from a variety of disciplines. Bateson based his work on a web of concepts from evolutionary theory, epistemology, clinical and social psychology, and cultural anthropology.

Remove barriers between disciplines
Architect Mark Mobach (2010) advocates the removal of barriers between disciplines and their paradigms. Because figures, ideas, power, meaning, fun, fantasy, and reality are constantly interacting, it is not always clear what hard and what soft data are. A more integral and interdisciplinary approach of academic research on the influence of the spatial environment will substantially improve the functioning of people in and around organisations. This is recognized by:
- Practice-complexity instead of lab-experiments
- Qualitative rich descriptions instead of figures and numbers
- Systemic multifactor research instead of reductionist one factor
- Working multidisciplinary instead of mono-disciplinary

He signals that this type of research draws heavily on the researchers' creativity and often anecdotes have to be accepted as sufficient argumentation.

Working across boundaries of disciplines is also reflected in my research approach concerning the effectiveness of LSI. Victor Minichiello and Jeffrey Kottler (2010, p. 29) provide an overview of ma-

jor qualitative methodologies. They mention Grounded Theory, Phenomenology, Narrative, Case study, Ethnography. This research journey has traits of all five.

As stated in Section 2.7, in trying to bridge the gap between theory and practice, by walking on the two legs of academic understanding and practical experience, I also feel the risk of incomprehension in the academic world on the one side, and in LSI practice on the other. Bateson calls this 'walking on the razor's edge'. How to deal with this will be further discussed in Chapter 16, regarding evidence based consultancy.

Encouragement by consultants
The involvement of consultants in the research process also furnished the research process with recommendations: "The work you are doing is very important to the field right now. It is moving us towards thinking whole again, thinking underlying principles and ways of being with the groups we work with rather than thinking methodologies! Your guide will be the provocateur to bring all our best to any work." (Sylvia James, co-author of Whole-Scale Change, see DannemillerTyson (2000a), Consultant participant in the online research conference on validity and usability of the Practical Guide).

I hope this 'moving towards the whole' of LSI and my role of 'provocateur' will bear fruit in the future.

15.3 Large Group Interventions as member checks: Innovation of intervention research

The interactive research conferences, described in Chapter 8, played an important role in establishing credibility and transferability of the Practical Guide. Up to 60 stakeholders in research on LSI participated in a live conference and an online conference. Participants were researchers of interventions for organisational change, practitioners of LSI, clients of LSI, and students of Organisation Studies. What can be learned from this technique for intervention research? A summary follows of lessons learned, presented as appreciations and lessons for improvements for each of the conferences, as stated by participants.

"I was driving home and it came to my mind how unique it is to connect different perspectives in this way, and I realised how many truths exist simultaneously." (Researcher, participant live ReSearch Conference)

Appreciations and improvements for the research conferences as stated by participants

<u>Appreciations for the live conference:</u>

- The way we are doing this is an innovation for science
- We're in this together, we're all learning together
- We practice what we preach by doing this, learning from stakeholders, a form of professionalising
- This conference makes discussion possible.

Lessons for improvement of the live conference:

- Facilitators concluded: what an almost impossible task we asked of participants in the research conference. We should have given much more attention to introducing them to the assumption and choices made, the considerations and the arguments. More space is needed for explanation of context and goals of the research
- In general, take more time to learn to know each other, to connect to each other and to the subject. More time for plenary discussion, less directions and controls
- In addition to collective data-gathering: do the data analysis also collectively; more voice for participants, less role and control by facilitators
- Ask more explicitly for commitment to participation after confirming (what does it mean when you say *yes* and do not show up without any notification)
- Invite more clients, they were relatively under-represented.

Appreciations for the online conference:

- The terrific organisation, a model for what is needed to support good collective thinking
- It is an intensive and tiring experience, but although it is not as good as a three-day live meeting, it works fine.

Lessons from the online conference:

- For a member check we have to plan more time for topic selection and/or ask participants to prepare their topics in advance
- We have to learn how to 'chat': use short sentences, abbreviations
- It is sometimes hard to follow the line of thought, with several threads intertwining
- Organise convergence in another way.

The member check conferences succeeded in involving a diversity of stakeholders in academic research (researchers, practitioners, clients, students). Participants of the conferences contributed in various ways to further improvement and embedding of the Practical Guide. They provided input for next steps in synthesis of the field beyond specific Large Group Methods, and for more effective use of LSI as an approach for organisational change. However, more time for discussing the selection of the most important success factors would probably have sharpened the tools, making the evaluation instrument simpler to operate.

> "'It is 'a journey of creative science'; would be a good title for an article." (Researcher, participant live ReSearch conference, September 2009)

Several participants considered the research conferences to be an innovation in intervention research. Soon after the conferences I was invited to write an article on how principles of LSI can also be applied in intervention research. The article is published under the title 'Practise what you preach: Large group conferences as member check in intervention research' (Zouwen, 2010b).

In the conferences, the participants were explicitly selected by the researcher. The next step might be (further) development and validation of Practical Guides in Open Source, sharing and building knowledge via online tools, just as nowadays is done with software programmes. The next Section presents the story of my adventures in applying the Open Source principle for research on LSI.

15.4 Open Source principle in qualitative research: A Wiki as research space

In many research projects, especially in disciplines using deductive quantitative methods, research process and outcome are under embargo until officially published in scientific journals, preferably highly ranked ones. Being the first to come up with specific findings is important for gaining authority in the field, and for acquiring resources from sponsors. Quite differently, in Naturalistic Inquiry, just as in Action Research, it is essential to involve members of the practice under study in the research process from the very beginning (Erlandson, et al., 1993; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2001). Gaining entrance for data-gathering, and affirmation of outcome by the people in the context, are important in establishing trustworthiness, as discussed in Section 3.6.

In a workshop session at the exploration phase, one of the 'members' of this research suggested to continue the discussion and to share findings (see Section 6.2). Since this would extend my audit trail, one of the quality criteria for Naturalistic Inquiry, I built a Wiki, a type of website, to present and discuss the research process and outcome (Zouwen, 2008a).

> **What is a Wiki?**
> A **wiki** (/ˈwɪki/ *WIK-ee*) is a website that allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG text editor.[1][2][3] Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often used to create collaborative wiki websites, to power community websites, for personal note taking, in corporate intranets, and in knowledge management systems.
> Wikis may exist to serve a specific purpose, and in such cases, users use their editorial rights to remove material that is considered 'off topic.' Such is the case of the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia.[2] In contrast, open purpose wikis accept content without firm rules as to how the content should be organised. (Text copied from www.wikipedia.org , 27 October 2010)

The great advantages of a website are openness and flexibility. Information can be published and updated by the researcher herself, at any time. Besides text, downloadable documents, reactions, sound, photos, videos, and slide-shows can also be added. All information can easily be accessed and modified by everyone at any time, as far as authorized by the researcher.

The making of the Wiki turned out to be a helpful means of structuring my own thinking about the research process, because texts on the internet have to be short and to the point. Furthermore, the Wiki served as an open source of information for everyone who was interested in what my research was about. All drafts of my research products could be easily accessed and downloaded through sending an email with just the URL linking to the specific page in the Wiki. Figure 15-2 presents a screenshot of the home page (Main Page) of the Wiki.

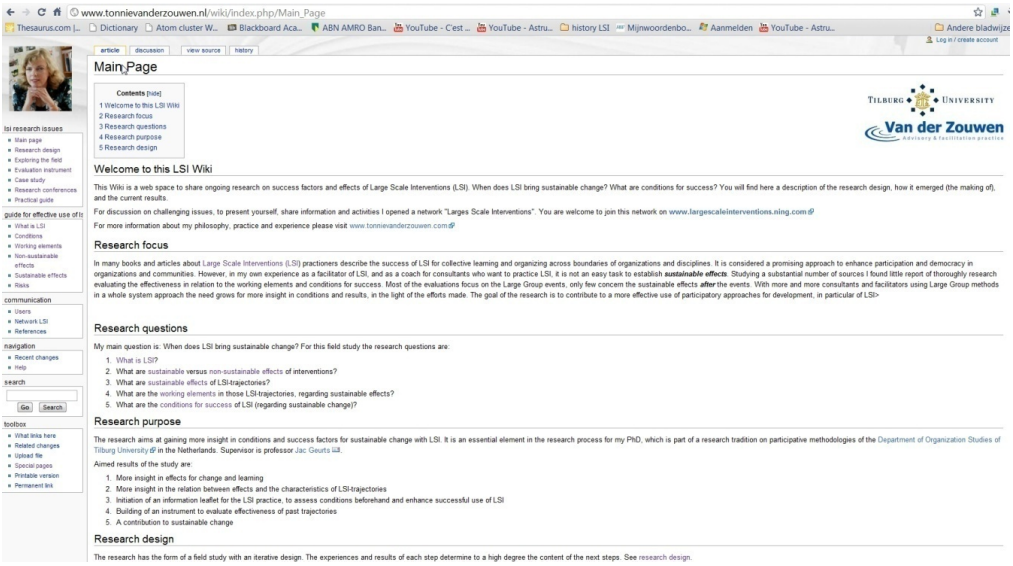


Figure 15-2: Main Page of the Wiki for research on effective use of LSI (screenshot October 2010)

For the Wiki, I used the same software the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia has been built with. At first, my intention was to invite peers, and other interested people, to write comments on an article, on a special discussion page. It turns out that the Wikipedia software may be a good choice for sharing texts or writing articles together, but is not very suited for building a social network around an issue. Later on, I launched an additional site, to share and discuss files and research issues (Zouwen, 2008b), using software especially made for building social communities. The activity on the network was rather low, since I could not invest much time in moderating the network. Nevertheless, at the time of writing, 25 members had joined the network, by sending their ideas and comments regarding my research on LSI. The full version of the tools of the evaluation instrument (see Appendix 3) will be available on the Wiki (Zouwen, 2008a).

15.5 Writing up qualitative research: Show them the baby, not the labour

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. Most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. (George Lakoff)

All research reports ask for accurate and careful writing. In addition, reporting a Naturalistic Inquiry has some difficulties of its own. To enable the reader to experience that was originally mine alone (Wolcott, 2001, p. 65), I had to provide thick descriptions of cases, and lively reports of my experiences. It is necessarily a work of art (Erlandson et al., p. 172). Telling stories, providing poetic insights by using metaphors, providing more 'look and feel' by illustration with photos, are ways I used to invite the reader to experience the research journey vicariously.

Ideas do not come out of the blue. Since I am not an experienced storyteller, I invested quite some time and effort in looking for inspiration and guides. For writing up qualitative research I found

ideas and guidelines in the work of Harry Wolcott (2001), Michael Patton (2001), David Erlandson et al. (1993), Laurel Richardson (2003), and Victor Minichiello and Jeffrey Kottler (2010). I was inspired by the writing styles and stories of Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (see Reference List), Jac Geurts et al. (2007), Eduard Hall (1984), Karl Weick (1993, 1995), Gregory Bateson (2002), Arnold Cornelis (1993), Frans de Waal (2005), and Hans Vermaak (2009a). To everyone who wants to be a writer, I recommend reading the work by Natalie Goldberg (1986, 1990), and doing the writing exercises she provides. It really helped me to be able to start 'writing down the bones' and 'living the writers life, freeing the writer within'. For dissertation writers Joan Bolker's book *Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes a Day* (1998) helps one to get started. My major lesson: start writing, and whenever in trouble, write some more.

Using metaphors in writing up qualitative research
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson recommend rethinking 'knowledge' in alternative metaphors than the heliocentric one (using words as enlightening, viewing, etcetera). Use metaphors situated in 'voice' (What do we hear? How does it sound? Or situated in 'touch': how does it feel? (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In this book, I used film and journey metaphors (see the following examples).
<u>The film metaphor:</u>
Sneak preview - Episodes – Season – Part - The making of - Extra material: website, tools, background information - Multimedia.
<u>The journey metaphor:</u>
The site as a landscape – Disorientation - Orientation, navigation - Guides: signposts, compass, map, guides - Goal, destination – Adventures - Experiences; see (people, facts), hear (stories, noise), feel (unease, discomfort, comfortable, anxiety, glad, disappointment, euphoria, despair, lost) - Hijacker, rover, pirates - Dragons, pitfalls, sea monsters - Sight-seeing tours – Expedition - Dead alley - Frontiers, boundaries, pushing and crossing boundaries - Travelling back and forth - Baggage, luggage - Perspectives, views - On the move - Climbing mountains - Space, enclaves - Detours, delays – Discoveries - Taking risks: exhilarating, challenging, dangerous, frightening - Traditional routes or emergent ones, making the path as we walk - The edge of the cliff - Sights revisited – Location - It is not a guided package tour - Return to base - 'In the beginning' - To take stock of my journey so far - Future directions and plans – Hazard - Embarking

It is up to the reader to judge whether I succeeded in my writing goals.

15.6 Recommendations for further research on the effectiveness of LSI

"If there are more dilemmas of this work than the ones you have collected, I cannot imagine what they are. I believe that with the guide, and your interactive meetings, you have made a major contribution to the discussion of Large Group Interventions." (Marvin Weisbord, personal email 2009)

Ignorance and knowledge grow together (Weick, 1993, p. 647), so research is never really finished. What might next journeys be?

Broadening the view: evaluation of more LSIs

The evaluation instrument has been tested in three cases. Students evaluated four more LSIs (Adema, 2010; Mortel, 2010; Poppelaars, 2010). Still, the cases cover only a small part of all possible LSIs. Although the evaluation criteria are formulated on a high level of abstraction (they have to be filled in with specific criteria for each specific LSI and LGI method), and it is said by founders that LSI can work in every organisation, continent and culture (Brown & Isaacs, 2005; Owen, 1997; Weisbord & Janoff, 2010a), I recommend evaluation of more LSIs. The evaluations in the case study have the following limitations:

- Type of system: Organisations of a 'flock' type with a central office and more or less independent branch offices, non-profit sector, knowledge-intensive services, SME size, located in the Netherlands
- LSIs: relatively short LSIs with lead time less than a year, only one and relatively short LGI meeting of ¾ -1 day, large group size between 50 and 160
- Evaluation procedure: one-off post-evaluation, done by a single auditor; the auditor was involved in the interventions (as facilitator in Case 1 and 2, as former trainer of the facilitator and backstage coach in Case 3)
- The people who participated in the reconstruction of the cases may not be representative of the population at large (J. D. Adams, 2003, p. 5).

Further testing is recommended for other types of LSI, regarding:

- Type of system: profit, other non-profits, communities, networks, large organisations, sectors and countries.
- LSIs: longer lead time, longer LGI, more LGIs
- Evaluation procedure: with an audit team, pre-post procedure, peer review, learning history approach with the whole system.

Evaluation with an audit team to prevent personal bias

The evaluation of the cases has been done by a single person, at the end it was my judgement that tipped the scales. Moreover, I was already involved in two of the three cases as a facilitator. Bias was compensated for by the large number of indicators and success factors, by triangulation of perspectives in data gathering, and by member checks. Nevertheless, an audit team is recommended for evaluation to account for the differences in judgement. When collective learning or collaboration is the goal of the evaluation, an audit team with stakeholders and a Learning History type of procedure (Roth & Kleiner, 1998; Smid, 2007; Zouwen, 2005b) is necessary.

How did my involvement in the interventions influence the evaluation? I see an advantage in my active role with availability and depth of the information and in the first hand personal experience of the process. Another positive influence comes from my relationship with the key players. They have met me before, we share experiences, and they trust me to some extent. That makes it easier to have an in-depth interview. When I listened to the recordings for analysis, most interviews

sounded more like a conversation than an interview. On the other hand, our relationship might also be a disadvantage. It may cause them to hold back critique and focus on the positive effects, in order not to hurt me. In comparing the evaluation of Case 1 and Case 2 (see Appendix 3.7), there seems to be no sign of major relationship bias. Both cases were facilitated by me, together with my colleague Ronald. Interviewees did not hesitate to be critical in Case 2.

Longitudinal research of cases

As stated before, with the evaluation instrument only 'contributed to ...' conclusions can be drawn, strengthened by answers 'to what extent was it worth the effort' from stakeholders. More insight into how much an LSI contributes in change processes requires longitudinal studies. Longitudinal studies are also necessary to find relationships between follow-up actions and the effectiveness (Geurts et al., 2007).

In this Chapter, we discussed the quality of the research process. The next Chapter will focus on the impact of the research process, by discussing the use of the Practical Guide for LSI practice, as a form of Evidence based Consultancy.

16 Evidence based consultancy and use of the Practical Guide for LSI

16.1 Research and LSI practice: Mixing oil with water

By building a Practical Guide for LSI based on systematic empirical research, I entered the field of Evidence based Consultancy (EBC). In this Chapter, the pros and cons of Evidence based Consultancy and the use of the Practical Guide for LSI will be discussed.

*In the research conferences on the validity and usability of the Practical Guide, described in Chapter 8 and discussed in Section 15.3, the mayor issues concerning EBC were brought up by participants. The first issue is expressed in the question "*Can *the effects of a complex intervention like LSI be measured?", and second, "*Should *the effects of LSI be measured?" However, if one decides that EBC is possible and desirable, there is an enormous job to be done: for every intervention type, a synthesis of the field must be done, and guidelines for practitioners must be distributed in an attractive and practical form (Baaijens, et al., 2009; Gilgun, 2005; Rousseau, et al., 2008; Tarling, 2008).*

Table 16-1 provides a summary of the conclusions from the research conferences. In the next sections, the pros, cons and dilemmas of the Practical Guide will be further discussed.

16.2 To what extent can the effectiveness of LSI be measured?

What is Evidence based Consultancy?

Evidence based Consultancy (EBC) is a form of Evidence based Practice (EBP), meaning that decisions on interventions for organisational change or management are based on explicit evidence. This evidence is gathered in a formal academic research process, or derived from repeatedly manifest positive results in practice (Baaijens, et al., 2009). The creation of 'User's Guides' is a way to make the evidence available to practitioners and clients.

Medicine is the parent discipline of Evidence based Practice. The corner stones of EBP are (Gilgun, 2005, p. 52):

1. Professional and explicit norms for assessment and evaluation
2. Actions of professionals are based on recent evidence, provided by academic research and expert knowledge from practice.
3. The context of the Client is taken into account; the context determines the interventions.

Practical Guides for treatments of a patients in healthcare, or for organisational change in consultancy are not intended to standardize or rationalise the process (Baaijens, et al., 2009, p. 92). In EBC, norms always have to be filled in for the specific situation.

Other Evidence based Practices are:
EBM = Medicine
EBSW = Social Work (Gilgun, 2005)
EBMgt = Management (Lawler III, 2005)
EBF = Finance
EBC= Consultancy (Baaijens, et al., 2009)
EBE = Education.

Table 16-1: Pros, cons and dilemmas of a Practical Guide for effective use of Large Scale Interventions (According to participants of the research conferences)

Issues	Pros	Cons and dilemmas
Can the effectiveness be measured?	Establishes common ground across Large Group Methods, through convergence at the level of principles: - Facilitates dialogue about LSI and its effectiveness - We can use it to relate to other fields - Brings research thinking and practice together - Is an attempt to validate the field.	Dilemma: The history of social science is in the way. Research is often seen as exclusively for linear cause-effect processes: - It must be very clear what causality has been adopted in this research, including the worldview it is based on and the consequences for evaluation of the effectiveness - Measuring is a linear process, that does not fit the spiral/circular change process, and success always has more fathers; effects should always be described in terms of 'the LSI contributed to …..' - In LSI, participatory working is both a condition and a result.
Should the effectiveness be measured?	Potential to help both client and facilitator to improve the quality of an LSI: - Helps to convince others - Offers a framework for assessment of preconditions, to develop a good contract - Helps in expectation management, offers support for conversations - Preventing abuse of LSI as a control instrument - Offers a framework for evaluation - Is a tool for training of consultants - Facilitates learning from past projects, to improve our practice - Offers a tool for assessment of facilitators.	We do not need the rigour of a scientific approach: - Reduces openness and flexibility when the guide is misused as too steering/predictive, too normative - Kills enthusiasm by too cold a scientific approach - Analysis risks losing the essence of the art of facilitating - We already know that it works - Clients and consultants might not be interested in evaluation, because they have an interest in an image of success - Success is never guaranteed, and goals may change during the process.

A holistic view on research and evidence is needed for EBC

Systematic syntheses intend to establish a way to tell what is true, as best we can. Judgement and interpretation are crucial to this synthesis and cannot be eliminated by proceduralisation, making it '… a sensemaking exercise and not a mechanical one' (Rousseau, et al., 2008, p. 491). No clear consensus exists regarding what is 'best evidence'. In intervention research, it is not possible to do Randomized Trial Controls (RTCs). We have to rely on best practices from the past. The factors and effects of the Practical Guide on LSI can be viewed as objectified tacit knowledge of experienced professionals (Baaijens, et al., 2009, p. 88).

Sharing knowledge is difficult, partly because a substantial part is tacit knowledge, and some facts are hard to catch. Factors complicating measuring the effectiveness are (Gilgun, 2005; Baaijens, et al., 2009):

- A delayed effect may show after many years
- Effects other than those of the original system of the LSI may show up in different places and different people
- Unconscious effects may exist, later on not linked to the LSI. What if the best change is the not-conscious change? Where and when do we notice any results?
- There is always a mix of influences. What can be assigned to the LSI?
- You never know what would have happened without the LSI or with another intervention strategy
- Not everything a facilitator does is visible; presence is important (Owen, 1997; Senge, et al., 2005; Weisbord & Janoff, 2007).

Many participants in the research conference support the idea that measuring is a linear process that does not fit the spiral/circular change process. They see a conflict between assessing and predicting effects. Others say it is just the history of social research that is in the way. In my opinion, in Organisation Studies more attention has to be paid to the possibilities of sophisticated qualitative research methods. The building of the Practical Guide for LSI has shown how paradoxical causality and non-linear processes can be addressed. The model of Will, Discipline and Communication provides a holistic view on knowledge, expressed in the three different knowledge systems. Based on this holistic view, the Practical Guide acknowledges multi-variable complexity, and this involves facts as well as skills and feelings.

Clinical judgement and practice: Mixing oil with water
Herbert Simon points out that people trained in business schools and researchers trained in a basic discipline tend to gravitate toward a bi-modal separation. The first group gets absorbed by the culture of business, the other group gets largely sealed off from the practitioner's environment. The 'real' academics begin to view the management profession (and the consultant!) as an irrelevant source for generating, developing, or applying new knowledge. Building an internal professional culture that respects and tolerates diversity among basic and applied researchers is very much like mixing oil with water (Ven, 2000, pp. 394-395).

Between mystery and mastery

"*There is more than techniques; there is always something like 'magic' to make things change.*" (Consultant participant research conference)

I realise there is a risk of the Practical Guide being downgraded to a checklist predicting outcomes, causing the loss of the essence of the art of facilitating (Vermaak, 2009a, p. 85). "*In the US there is a big push for 'evidence based', which conflicts often with the emergent sense in this work. In contracting, clients want to know the 'outcomes' before the experience.* "(Participant ReSearch conference, September 2009). A checklist may be of help, but it does not guarantee a useful process. That is to be found in applying the principles of LSI, translated into a process that matches the specific situation. Guidelines based on these principles do not exclude emergence of incomprehensible effects, of spirituality. On the contrary, since self-organisation of relations is central in LSI, they are part of the game (Zohar, 1997).

Balancing control and creativity, a reflection
Personal log, 3 January 2010: Yesterday, I saw a television documentary on the Berliner Philharmonic Orchestra. In an interview, the conductor Sir Simon Rattle says: "You try to set up things so something can fly. If you arrange too little it is everyone for oneself. If you arrange too much, you make the wings so heavy you cannot fly. It is a constant search for balance." I think the same is true for using the Practical Guide on LSI.

16.3 Should the effectiveness be measured?

"We do not need proof to choose LSI, you just try it because you feel it works. Others will never do it simply because you proved it works "(participant ReSearch Conference)

A factor complicating EBC is opportunistic behaviour caused by the multiplicity of the relationship between client and consultant (Baaijens, et al., 2009). Both consultants and clients may have an interest in an image of success, for political or commercial reasons. Tarling states (2008 p. 47): "It raises the issue of the consultant's responsibility both to the OD profession and to the client's needs. If consultants do not have some responsibility for the outcome of interventions, there is the possibility they have little inclination to assess their results. Who is responsible for follow-up?"

Solutions to overcome barriers to EBP include (Gilgun, 2005):

- Developing research that is accessible and meaningful to practitioners
- Providing training in the interpretation and application of research
- Providing practitioners with the time and resources to search out best research evidence.

Facilitator as artist using techniques
"In sum, the ability of an 'Artist' to be both premeditated (in competently executing every complex detail of the method) and ingenious (in sensing when the changes could be made in real time in order to better meet the client's objectives) is crucial". (Shmulyian, et al., 2010, p. 216)

I think in consultancy, just as in Evidence based Nursing and other EBPs, competent practitioners should consider all sources of evidence and then continually test and modify their assumptions and actions in the light of client responses. No responsible social worker would state that we should not use relevant research in our practice (Gilgun, 2009. p. 58). However, we have to admit that this accumulative and regulatory culture does not (yet) exist in the consultancy field. There is a need for professional institutional change, in addition to the loads of accumulative work to be done.

16.4 Use of the Evaluation Instrument

Whether, when and by whom an evaluation should be performed depends on the goals of the evaluation. Van de Meer & Edelenbos (2006) distinguish several functions of evaluation: to enable *accountability, collective learning and cooperation*. As the key question, they mention 'What do evaluation activities and results mean to the different actors involved?' The evaluation arrangement should be discussed, with as leading question 'Who needs to benefit from the evaluation?' In this section, evaluation arrangements for the different functions of the evaluation instrument of the Practical Guide will be summarised.

The evaluation impact is not so much dependent on the question of how many actors read the report and what they individually make of it, but on when and how it contributes to changes in social patterns. The key question is: "What do evaluation activities and results mean to the different actors involved?" (Meer & Edelenbos, 2006).

Participative evaluation for collective learning implies that users actively participate in interpreting findings, forming judgements and making recommendations. The degree of participation must be defined in each evaluation context (Gregory, 2000). For LSI, self-evaluation by the planning team is an option for collective learning.

Another goal can be to provide decision-makers with the information they deem necessary (Gregory, 2000). For accountability audits, the evaluation instrument of the Practical Guide can be used by a team of external auditors.

The evaluation instrument can be used in academic research for further synthesis of the field. This should preferably be done by two or more auditors, to compensate for personal bias. The evaluation instrument can play a role in improving own practice, for practitioners of LSI, in training for consultants who want to become practitioners of LSI, and for students of Organisation Studies.

Improving own practice by self-evaluation
I did a test myself by evaluating 15 past LSIs from my own practice. I made a matrix of LSIs and the main success factors and effects, just as I remembered them, without asking anyone else. The matrix produced valuable insights. A pattern emerged concerning the least effective LSIs. The main reason they were not effective: I should have said NO in the first place. Either I was the one who wanted to 'sell' an LSI, or the time was too short to reach the intended goals. It really helped me to become more realistic in initial conversations with clients, and during an LSI, to keep working on expectation management. Another point of attention turned out to be that I was too busy with the methods and the terminology, instead of with the people in front of me, and with the issues they wanted to address.
Other consultants confirm the usefulness of the evaluation instrument for improving own practice and in training. "I used the evaluation instrument with a couple of new processes over the past year and found it very helpful in just reminding me of things I should include in the contract and to stimulate me to think about areas I might be missing." (Sylvia James, participant in the online research conference)

As concluded in Section 14.4, facilitators have to 'cook with the principles' of LSI, looking for 'good enough' solutions. However, teaching/training of LSI often requires that instructors treat a set of procedures as if they were rules. Yet learning how to use LGI methods, just as in teaching Grounded Theory research, necessitates moving beyond rules to a more profound, more nuanced, and more resilient understanding of the key principles of the method (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 12). For teaching and spreading the news, a manual with a clear set up, rules, and procedures, and with a specifically labelled LGI (i.e. Open Space, World Café, and Future Search) helps or is even a necessity. Yet a cookbook can also provide a foundation from which imaginative cooks can develop their own versions of recipes.

16.5 Further embedding of the Practical Guide in LSI practice

"The guide is a tool to make explicit what a good facilitator does implicitly, thus helping those who are less familiar with LSI in facilitating. This idea can also be used in other scientific fields. Spread it all over the world." (Participant ReSearch Conference September 2009)

The status of the Practical Guide is clear: it is built in a systematic research process and validated in a diverse group of up to 60 researchers, consultants and clients. However, in contrast to Evidence based Medicine, for EBC no central institute exists with the authority to validate and prescribe guidelines for consultancy practice worldwide. As said in Section 2.3, there is lack of synthesis in the field of organisation and management studies. Embedding of the Practical Guide has to be done through members of LSI practice. Participants in the research conferences recommended the following actions for further embedding of the Guide:

- Further testing in practice, let different users (consultants, clients, researchers) try out different formats of the guide: little information leaflets for clients, an intervention version for clients as well

- Connect the ‘coldness’ of the instrument to the ‘warmness’ of LSI
- Make the instrument available for planning teams
- Use purposefully during learning sessions
- Checklists when necessary
- Translate the instrument into value for the client.

Recommendations from members of LSI practice on marketing of the Guide
The guide will work if it is adapted to specific user groups, when it:
- Contains narratives: stories, case studies, video material
- Is dynamic: regular updates, interactive
- Has a flexible format: print, internet, E-book, PDA, catering for different learning styles
- Is sexy: well written, nice design, modern technology, viral marketing
- Is easy to use: short and simple for starters, option to drill down, well indexed.

Further development of the Guide will be done in Open Source, as mentioned in Section 15.4.

Afterword

"I used to want to change the world. Now I just want to leave the room with a little dignity." (Lotus Weinstock)

The writing of this guide can be seen as a wicked problem, so I had to settle for 'good enough', to be judged by stakeholders (researchers, practitioners, students). I realise we will never be able to grasp all of reality, or all ins and outs of an LSI, not even through arts such as poetry or music. That does not matter. It does not mean we cannot evaluate the effectiveness of LSI. Sophisticated qualitative research methods can deal with non-linear processes, while acknowledging multi-variable complexity and involving facts as well as ideas and feelings.

There is a massive publication bias on the effectiveness of LSI; almost all articles report success: practitioners know LSI works and they want to show it. I have wonderful experiences with LSI and I have seen breakthrough results. I also know it does not work every time and everywhere. As a facilitator, I have made mistakes I could have prevented with a better design. Sometimes I have said yes because I was eager to do the project where I should have said no. As practitioners, researchers and clients we can get smarter from systematic evaluation, building a synthesis of what we know what works and what does not work. Although success is never guaranteed, especially not in complex situations, we can enhance the chances for success.

I think there is no excuse to shut our eyes for abuse for commercial reasons. We have to accept the ongoing learning process it takes to develop skills as a facilitator. And how hard it is to work in everyday practice where conditions are never optimal, where we often have to deal with dilemmas such as lack of trust is, complex and intertwined developments, parallel intervention projects, and change of leaders. A practical guide for assessment of conditions and performance might help.

My hope is that the guide will stimulate more effective use of LSI. This will help to realize the high potential of LSI, and to make the client's chances to realise a desired future, however defined, as high as possible. We can only do this together, thanks to everyone who contributed to this guide.

To be continued,

Tonnie van der Zouwen

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Comparison of LGI methods

LGI method	Future Search	RTSC/ Whole Scale Change ™	World Café	Open Space
Primary purpose	- System wide strategic planning	- The design and implementation of whole system change	- Bringing forth the future, by discovering shared meaning	- The creation of self-managed meetings that generate high levels of ownership
Results	- Joint formulation of future vision and strategy - Plan for implementation of an existing vision or strategy - Fast action on complex issues that lack a coordination structure	- Creation of a preferred future with system-wide action planning - Involving an entire organisation in fast and far-reaching change	- Accessing collective intelligence, by creating a living sharing knowledge and creating possibilities for action - It is not about detailed action plans	- Exploration of plans and possibilities - Initiation of new networks/ taskforces/ action groups around topics
When to use	- Problems that cross the borders of the organisation or community - Developing coalition - Shared vision is desired, action plan is a necessity - High time pressure, urgent questions - An important change is at hand (merger, change of power)	- Complex or unclear situations - Development and implementation change - A lot of people need new competencies - Mergers and reorganisations - Introduction of new technology	- Exploring burning questions - Sharing knowledge to stimulate innovative thinking and create possibilities for action	- Resolving complex or conflict-ridden issues in a short period of time - When innovation and ownership are the desired outcomes - Creating community spirit - Exploring and planning new possibilities for action
Representation of the system	- 60 – 80 persons, a selected cross-Part of stakeholders - Planning team of ca. 12 persons, a micro cosmos of the system	- 10 - >2000 - Internal and external stakeholders - outside experts if appropriate - Diverse design team, microcosm of event participant group	- 12 - >1000 - People with an interest in the questions that matter	- 10 - > 1000 (limited only by the size of the venue) - All stakeholders interested, whoever comes are the right people - Voluntary self-selection for participation
Duration of conference(s)	- 16 hours over three days (sleep twice)	- 0,5 day – 4 days for each conference	3 hours – 3 days	1 – 3 days
Lead time	- 3 – 6 months for preparation - Monitoring results of actions during the following 12 month	- 1 – 3 months per conference for preparation - Lead time > 2 months	As long as it takes to invite people to participate	As long as it takes to invite and get people into the venue
Pre-conference	- Sponsor workshop - Meetings with design team	- Design team events, including sponsors	- Meeting with the sponsor	- Meeting with the sponsor

LGI method	Future Search	RTSC/ Whole Scale Change ™	World Café	Open Space
Exploring the system	- Review past from perspectives of self, organisation and society; identify the events, trends and developments shaping the future - Map the present in all its complexity; identify the prouds and sorries resulting from relations with the institution(s) or issue(s) at hand - Create ideal future scenarios of the most desirable attainable future, 5 – 20 years ahead	- Preferred Futuring - Work on a common database of information about the system and the desired transformation - outside experts can bring in information	- Invite diverse perspectives in dialogue	- Central theme is predefined
Format	- Set, highly structured - Exploring past, present and future, find common ground, action planning	- Custom made by a design team - A change process with one or more conferences with the whole system in the room - Highly structured and organised	- Café as a metaphor for an informal web of conversations - Café etiquette provides simple rules - Many variations possible with interactive creative techniques for sharing, prioritising	- Minimal structure, simple rules, emerging content
Engagement	- Work with mixed table groups and with stakeholder groups (ca. 8 persons) - Individual work and large group conversations - prioritising	- Self-managed table groups, in maxmix or stakeholder setting (6 – 8 persons) - individual work and large group work - prioritising and decision-making	- Progressive rounds (usually three) of conversations of 15 – 30 minutes each, moving between small tables, exploring questions that matter, connecting diverse perspectives - Plenary report of insights	- Plenary session in a circle - Generation of themes and making an agenda - Working in self-organising small groups - Marketplace to share results - Plenary session for prioritising issues and developing action plans
Data-gathering and analyses	- Data comes from the group participating in the conference	- Input from experts, gathered in prior or parallel projects, if necessary - Common database of strategic information is available to all - daily participant feedback	- Doodling on table cloths - Collective visualisation of process and results, sharing in a whole group conversation	- Self organised by participants - Market place and reports to share results
Other characteristics	- Think globally act locally put common ground and future focus front and cen-	- 1 – 10+ events during transition - Working in real time: simultaneous	- Listening together for patterns, insights and deeper questions, shar-	- Maximum self-organisation of participants

LGI method	Future Search	RTSC/ Whole Scale Change ™	World Café	Open Space
	tre while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items	planning and implementation - Dissatisfaction with current reality is key driver, not what is supposed to happen - Logistics teams (depending on group size)	ing collective discoveries - Simply to organise with high profits - Hospitable space - Well-crafted questions - Logistics team (depending on group size)	- Set of reports is ready for all participants at the end of each day - Logistics teams (depending on group size)
Planning and post conference (follow-up)	- Action plans and action teams developed at the end of the conference - Monitoring results of actions during the following 12 month - Action groups are responsible for further actions	- Workshops, meetings in small groups - More large group conferences if necessary	- Depends on participants	- Depends on participants
Role of the facilitator	- Alignment sponsor/client - Work with the planning team - Encourage self-management and responsibility for action by participants before, during, and after the Future Search	- Alignment sponsor/client - Work with the design team and the planning committee - Foster maximum ownership of process, content and outcomes	- Help prepare the invitation - Being the Café host: explain purpose and logistics, facilitate group dialogue at the end	- Help prepare the invitation - Facilitator lays out format and ground rules - Facilitator is as much as possible 'invisible', just holding the space
Requirements facilitator(s)	- Believe in principles of Future Search - Special training	- Special training	- Familiar with guidelines World Café - Thoughtfulness, artistry and care in hosting	- Reading the user's guide, the book "Open Space" of Harrison Owen
Developer(s) and reference	Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (Weisbord & Janoff, 1995)	Kathie Dannemiller, Chuck Tyson, Al Davenport, and Robert Jacobs (DannemillerTyson 2000a; Jacobs, 1997)	Juanita Brown and David Isaacs (Brown & Isaacs, 20005)	Harrison Owen (Owen, 1997)

Appendix 2: Evaluation Instrument: Success factors and effects of LSI

Success factors and effects of LSI and how they can be observed in practice

 = Open interview  = Documents

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
1. Context/Task: LSI is the right approach		
1.1. The task is important	- A leader with an itch to scratch, a compelling business purpose - An urgent problem or issue, business as usual is not a viable option - A super-ordinate goal or shared concern - Multilevel issues - The expected benefits must outweigh the costs	 Client, participants, consultant - Why this? What was the intention of the LSI? - Why now? - Was it worth the effort?
1.2. Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task	- No one of the stakeholders can do alone what they can to together - Need for joint problem definition and strategy in diversity and conflict - A basic willingness to work together, awareness that collaboration is necessary	
1.3. Situation is complex and/or uncertain	- A high level of fragmentation - Uncertain, fast changing situations - Multiple complexities and ambiguities to deal with, nobody could possibly know all the details or all the answers - The change is transformational - Unprecedented or breakthrough changes call for unprecedented or breakthrough action	
1.4. Contra-indications	- Issue is not important to anyone - Task is abstract and likely to lead to talk without action - One-way information transfer is required (confidentiality, loss of face, knowledge transfer) - Individual professionals can solve the problem	

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	- No opportunity for change, due to lack of resources, energy, time or lack of actual influence	
2. Client: Leaders support the LSI approach		
2.1. Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power	Leaders: - Have good intentions - Are credible, no hidden agendas - Show willingness to work from a shared power-base to achieve shared ownership - Believe that collaboration is more likely to stimulate follow-up - Tolerate uncertainty, are able to stay with "not knowing" - Minimise the influence of power differences and adopt a neutral position - Allow local control and establish clear boundaries - Are willing to live with the outcome	💬 .Client - Were you prepared to support follow-up? Did you? 💬 Participants - How did you feel when you were invited? - What were your expectations?
2.2. Leaders are willing to spend time and money to do it "by the book"	Leaders: - Are prepared to support follow-up, carefully balancing between too much and too little support - Act as champions who sponsor the process, or want to involve a champion - Show commitment and persistence	
2.3. Political climate: enough trust to start	- Leaders realize and acknowledge that trust is unlikely to be present from the start - Conditions for trust building are created by providing a minimal structure - Careful consideration of cross cultural communication - Degree of negative stereotyping between groups does not prevent participation of specific stakeholders - Willingness to opt for a different way, despite political vulnerability	
2.4. Contra-indications:	- Highly-charged political situations with no space for open discussion or follow-up action; fight-flight behaviour, apparent indifference - Leaders delegate the process to subordinates and show up only at the beginning and/or the end - Focus on personal gain, win-lose dynamic	

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	- Sponsor wants to squeeze work into too short a time - Fast cycle of leadership succession - Withdrawal behaviour: declining attendance at planning meetings - Unspoken agenda: ongoing negotiation and discussion outside the planning group about the central issue - Communication with responsible staff is done by an intermediary such as a project leader	
3. Consultant: Facilitators are skilled to conduct an LSI		
3.1. Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client	Facilitators: - Insist on adequate time with the client to clarify the contract, and discuss implications for the process and for follow-up - Work on alignment with (top)leaders, share information openly before the LGI: in a workshop/meeting with the management team to demonstrate the principles and implications for personal roles and follow-up - Help to set clear goals, by starting with solid understanding of what is to be accomplished with the process; the task is well-defined - Bring and keep the principles of LSI front and centre - Focus on the bigger process, not on an event or method - Help to create clear boundaries that create a meaningful playing field: enough room for people to play, but people do not get lost; balancing top-down and bottom-up decisions - Help leaders manage their anxiety about uncertainty of the process and loss of control - Avoid the "they won't come dialogue", people nearly always come once they know the importance of the task and who else is coming - Build follow-up into their fee structure, at least an evaluation meeting, and offer advice and consultation on ways to increase diffusion and support sustainability	 <u>Contract with the client (proposals)</u> - What goals are mentioned? - Are the principles of the approach explained? - What boundaries are set? (clear/abstract) - Is follow-up built in or mentioned?  <u>Client, consultant</u> - Was there a sponsor meeting? - Were principles demonstrated and/or discussed before the LGI? - Did the playing field suite the task? (Model When LGI?) - Were the boundaries of participation

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
		and responsibility clear to you? Client, consultant, participants - Choose interaction levels on chart "When LSI"
3.2. Facilitators gain credibility, managing expectations	Facilitators: - Make a conscious choice for application of LSI, making the aims of the LSI explicit - Check and explore each other's assumptions about LSI - Don't raise expectations they can't fulfil, they aim for good enough rather than for unrealistic outcomes - Are able to explain why they are doing what they are doing (methodical reasoning) in everyday language - Show energy and decisiveness - Show positive personality, appearance of trust, maturity, calmness, integrity	Client, Consultant - What made you say "yes" to this process? - What did you say "no" to? - What were your expectations? - Looking back, do you consider your expectations realistic?
3.3. Facilitators are aware of their own role	Facilitators: - Are conscious of their impact on the system, from the start - Are aware of own assumptions about change and the role of knowledge - Know their own strength and weaknesses, facilitation is preferably done with two facilitators who complete each other	Client and consultant - What was your role in the process? - What do you consider as your relevant strength and weaknesses for this process?
3.4. Facilitators have skills to work with large groups	Facilitators: - Are tolerant for ambiguity - Have the objective to accept people as they are, not as facilitators might wish them to be - Work on staying calm, to contain "messiness" long enough to prevent premature structuring	Participants, client - Did you feel free to participate and contribute?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	- Can contain frustration projected onto them - Are prepared to let go of their need to control the change process, but hold on to a vision during ups and downs of the project - Are able to deal with differences and competitive attitudes in a constructive way, in function of the jointly defined goals - Are experienced enough to deal with the circumstances - Have experience in working with large groups - Are improving their competence in working with large groups, for example through intervision, supervision, or training	- What moments did stand out for you? Why? - What did the facilitator do or not do that was important for you? - How was time managed?  Consultant - Were there difficult moments for you? What did you do? - How did you manage time? Were you satisfied with it? - Were you trained to work with large groups? How?
3.5. Facilitators believe in the principles of LSI	Facilitators: - Adopt an open system perspective, paying attention to fragmentation and limitations - Recognise and respect diversity - Believe that ordinary people can engage in productive dialogue - Take contributions of participants seriously, so they do not prompt, correct, or interpret people; all participants are seen as experts - See themselves as co-investigators - Focus on possibilities for the future, not on problems now and in the past - Seek to alter conditions rather than behaviour - Promote and teach self-management	
3.6. Contra-indications consultant	- Facilitators want to sell LSI - Facilitators use abstract jargon, do not search for connection to the needs of the client - Facilitators take an expert role, believing they have the right answers	
4. Intervention: LSI is performed right		
4.1. LGI is planned as part of a larger effort	- A post-event strategy, or a sequence of LGIs, is planned or built in - The timing of the LGI: not to early and not too late in the process - Road map of the bigger process is available	 Contract, design LGI - Was the LGI part of a larger effort?  Participants, client

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
		- Was it the right time for you to have the LGI?
4.2. Working with a planning group for all essential decisions regarding design, management, and logistics	- Planning team/steering committee with key stakeholders, people who have the credibility and connections to get all the other participants to come - Planning team with diversity of perspectives, interests, identities, potential contributions; a cross-section of the system - Knowledge and ability to select stakeholder groups, especially the under-bound groups - Facilitator helps the planning group find common ground of interest across all the stakeholder groups - Awareness that whole system issues surface as a prelude to the larger meeting; points of conflicts are elicited - Alternative designs with enough diversity are offered and discussed - An invitation strategy for getting people to commit to the meeting time - Invitation with strategic questions and a challenging title - Conscious attention is given to the inclusiveness of participants who represent alternative or opposing perspectives on the issue at hand - Division of responsibilities is clearly enunciated at a very early stage; participants are responsible for the outcomes of the large group conference - Planning group has enough confidence in the process	Reports of planning group meetings, invitation(s) Consultant, client, planning group members - How was the stakeholder analyses done? (ARE-IN model) - How did you feel about the invitation
4.3. Design is coherent with context, task, relations and directions	- Principles of LSI are respected in design, using them in combination - Adequate LGI method selected, limitations of the method are discussed - Awareness of pattern-setting activities that may amplify or dampen the effects of change after the large group meeting - Awareness that the mere categorisation of people into different groups is a sufficient condition for negative stereotyping to develop - Enough time for preparation and invitation - Good timing of events considering the circumstances - Minimal and flexible design for real time adaptation, no more rules than strictly necessary - A broad spectrum of learning styles is met, work forms addressing head, heart and hands - Division of work done by planning team and in large group meeting is balanced with	Design, participant list, report LGI, reports planning team - Was the planning team a micro cosmos of the system? - Compare design with prescriptions LGI method: How many people were involved, what was the nature of the task, how much time did participants spend together? - How interactive was the design?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	available time and budget - LGI is interactive as much as possible - Enough time and space to get the work done - A 2-3 day LGI - Adequate project management	- What makes the way of working and the outcomes transferable? - Are "all" learning styles met? - Compare design and report: What differences can be seen?  Consultant, client - How was the planning team made up? - How was diversity invited?
4.4. Participants: getting the right people in the room	- Inclusion of stakeholders: Whole system is in the room (representation, micro cosmos), working across boundaries of the organisation; minimum 3 X 3 rule: 3 levels, 3 functions - Invite those who can influence or are influenced (ARE-IN: with Authority, Resources, Expertise, Information, Need) - Build critical mass, with capacity to facilitate and lead change - Highly diverse group: interests, opinions, age, sex, culture - Unusual meeting: Provide a forum for dialogue among people who rarely have an opportunity to hear one another - Stakeholders can and will come	 Invitation, participant list, contract, design, reports of meetings - Who were invited? - Who participated? - How was paid attention to key stakeholders who were not there?
4.5. Representation: consideration for those who are not present; contact needs to be supported by the larger social system	- Prevent 'ghosts' or 'prebsents'; champions who are only psychologically present, can have a strong impact, with real or imagined power - Identify key stakeholders who were unable to attend and arrange to brief them immediately - All relevant parties are represented in an acceptable way, the number of participants is considered consciously - Re-use the event briefing materials and working notes to sweep in people who were unable to attend	 Participants, client, consultant - Where the right people in the room? - Who should have been there too? - How do you feel about the group size? - Was there a critical mass involved in

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
		the overall LSI process? - How was paid attention to key stake-holders
4.6. LGI enables everyone's contribution (inclusiveness, building trust)	- Non-coercive process: people are free to come, no threats or sanctions - Meeting managed so the entire group can be in dialogue at each stage - No one is in the "expert" role: no long monologues, presentations etcetera, each person having a chance to speak and listen - Search for common ground: not an activism against the authority structure, but for the world we want - Powerful questions that stimulate mind, heart and soul to attract collaborative engagement - Facilitators invite openness, but participants decide what to reveal - Leaders express openness, not control; they do not intervene or try to control the process, and they contain anxiety - A structure that lets weaker people contribute as well, with room also for individual work: a balanced mixture of work in small groups, large group and individual work - Structure of the event/day facilitates containment, dealing with unpleasant feelings - No press invited; if unavoidable, pay special attention to their attitude and reports - The composition of the small groups must build the trust that this is not another form of manipulation - Participants need no special knowledge or prior training to succeed - Balance in energetic level of activities - Meeting face-to-face is stimulated in order to build trust, share information and enhance new relationships; use of technology must serve, not hinder, this process - Duration and work forms meet the needs of people who are not used to or unable to sit still for a longer time (for instance children, disabled, outdoor workers) - All recording is done publicly, on flip-charts or large paper sheets - Reception before the meeting permits release of tension gathered during the journey to the venue	 <u>Design, report</u> - How much work is done in small groups, how much individual, how much plenary? - How high was the potential "contribution time" for each participant? - What were the ground rules for working together?  <u>Participants</u> - Did you feel free to participate or not? - Did you feel free in what and how to contribute? - What were the ground rules?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
4.7. Divergence: Exploring the whole before fixing any parts, engaging new connections, building a common database of the system	- Reality is perceived in the complexity of its constant becoming; focus is on dynamics in relations, not on positions - Models of connections in the system are created and visualized, so each person is experiencing the whole of their organisation or community, in time and space - Making sense together by honouring the past - Engage in dialogue about perspectives on the present - Elicit people's dreams, making a shared picture of the preferred future - Cross pollination connects diverse perspectives, by travelling small groups or sitting in mixed stakeholder groups - The right information is publicly available at the right time to stakeholders - Group memory is created by visualisation; everything is worked out on i.e. flip charts - Sufficient "soak" time to digest all the data, interpretations and emotions	 Design, report - How was the whole explored? - How was the whole visualized? - Who did the data gathering? - How was the past honoured? - How was the preferred future explored? - How were perspectives exchanged?  Participants, client - How was the whole explored? - What did you learn?
4.8. Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management	- Structure facilitates self-management, puts the participants in leadership roles - Focus on contribution: focus on the relations, we instead of the I - No speakers or consultants telling participants what to think or what to do - People do all their own data-gathering, assembly, analyses, dialogue and wrapping up - A level playing field, no remote control: people have the work authority needed to accept responsibility for their performance and to give what they have to offer, whatever position they come from - "The majority rules", or power plays in design and performance are not accepted - People have a right to hold back and accept the consequences (no outcome)	 Design, report LGI, reports planning team - Did the design facilitate collaborative leadership and shared responsibility?  Participants, client - What was your responsibility as a participant?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
4.9. Convergence: Tapping into collective intelligence	- Listen and look together for patterns, insights and deeper questions - Observing the thought process in yourself and others: notice fragmentation or incoherence - Suspending judgment, assumptions and certainties: Experience unwritten and unconscious rules and patterns - Accessing the generative order in dialogue, sensing a mutually shared field, experience of a sense of community or collective wisdom - Playful moments, signs of humour	 Participants, client, consultant - Did you experience a sense of community? - How did you look for deeper insights or questions? - Did it work for you? What insights, questions? - Was there laughter, fun, spontaneous applause (or other signs of humour)?
4.10. Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process, the room setting symbolizes the principles of LSI	- Informal and hospitable atmosphere, a well-lighted room with windows - A neutral and accessible place for all participants, psychological safe - Location is physically safe to work with large groups - Location and room setting encourage feelings of equality - Personal comfort is as high as possible: beverages available at any time, good food, atmosphere, logistics, serving cultural needs - Meeting physically is necessary to make eye contact: helps building trust, enhances new relationships and invites strategic conversations - Residential conference gives participants time to interact outside the formal group time, away from other commitments - Room setting facilitates sharing of information, knowledge, learning - Facilitators are satisfied with the meeting room	 Photos, design, reports - Did the conference setting facilitate the goals of the meeting? - Are there signs of playful moments, fun, humour?  Participants, client, consultant - Did the conference setting facilitate the goals of the meeting?
4.11. Action planning for next steps is done in the LGI, or soon after	- Energy and ideas are channelled into action planning, identifying next steps - Common ground and future action first; problems and conflicts are background information - Agreements are reviewed plenary	 Design, report - How was action planning done?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	- Meeting and progress are celebrated - Immediate reporting at the end of the LGI, or soon after	 Participants, client, consultant - How was action planning done?
4.12. Reflection on conditions and principles with participants LGI	- Continuation thinking begins at start-up, reflection on the action learning questions: what's happening, what are we learning, what do we need to do next, how to continue - Participants understand they have a role in diffusion of the conference outcomes throughout the greater system - Attention is given to the conditions and principles that produce the effectiveness	 Design, photos, report - How was attention for the core principles build in? Look for signs - Planned actions for capacity building (training)  Participants, client - What was different in this meeting? What do you consider as conditions for success in this process?  Consultant - Did you give explicit attention the conditions and principles? How?
4.13. Building of capacity to work participatively	- Facilitators help people explore and develop new patterns of working on engagement, in their own organisation and in the bigger system - Training of support teams in designing their own LGI meetings; grasping is easy, applying is difficult - Training is planned for people to carry out new roles and to relate with each other in new ways; combination of training and large group conferences	
4.14. LGI is managed well by facilitators	Facilitators: - Prepare themselves for "holding space"; room set-up and materials are ready well before starting time - Make people feel welcome, by setting the right tone - Set the context by clarifying purpose and process - Communicate clearly the rules of the game, displayed on the wall and/or in a participant	 Participants - Did you feel invited by the consultant? - Was the purpose and process of the LGI clear to you?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	workbook - Deal with frustration, anger and anxiety; do not ignore them - Facilitate exploration, work with diversity rather than reducing it via power, stereotyping, conflict avoidance, conformity - Help people avoiding discussion or debate to engage in constructive dialogue, in function of the jointly defined goals - Understand thoroughly the level of polarisation and manage time to permit the fullest discussion of difference among participants: facilitate the deepest level of common ground instead of a superficial or narrow area - Keep a clear focus on issues and task	- How was dealt with differences, conflicts?
4.15. Building of a post-event support structure: during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated	- Follow-up planning sessions - Agreement on a protocol for decision-making - Learning Fairs or workshops for people throughout the organisation to share what action groups are doing - Procedure for monitoring of the action plan, for measuring results, progress and communication - Building of a systematic and stakeholder-oriented evaluation - Initiation of ongoing communication processes, an information system is designed in cooperation with primary users (review meetings, newsletters, website, interactive tools) - Action groups, implementation planning teams, task forces and other temporary structures are put in place - Agreement with a champion who promises to continue sponsoring the process, affirming and supporting the normative change - Circulate ideas from the LGI and invite comments from both attendees and other on specific issues - Adding representatives to an existing group for new interactions - Infiltrate agendas of already scheduled meetings both inside and outside the organisation with relevant follow-up from the LGI - Connection to the existing cycle of policy making	Contract, reports, evaluations - What post-event support structures were built? - What follow-up actions were planned? Client, participants, non-participants, consultant - What follow-up actions were planned?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
4.16. Contra-indications to holding the LGI	- Meeting goal is fuzzy or irrelevant to most participants - People can't or won't come 100% of the time - An important stakeholder group is absent - Design reinforces the existent power relations (an existing group, LGI has to be tailored to an already planned meeting) - No time or resources to realize the design in a proper way	
5. Effectiveness: Short-term effects; LSI contributes to getting more and better work done	Non-sustainable effects are transactional, they do not shift the norms, but may generate potentials, conditions, for sustainable effects of future change processes	
5.1. Short-term objectives are met	- LSI is considered worth the effort - New structures, strategies, procedures are formulated and/or implemented - New proposals, wishes, needs and interests introduced/ expressed - More informed decisions - Coherent and effective collaboration on an issue / problem - Consensus development among organisations and entities outside the formal structures of any of them - Increased individual skills - Controlling inspectors are satisfied	💬 Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - Did you get what you wanted? Why? - Did the practitioners accomplish what they set out to do? Why? - What did you change as a result of the process? What do you do different or not anymore? - Do action groups or follow-up structures still exist? What did they produce? - Did new relations or new networks emerge? 🗂 Ask for evidence, observables:
5.2. Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context	- Increased awareness of larger systemic developments - Discovery of generative themes, emerging patterns of working - A picture or model for operating in a more coherent, integrated way - Increased knowledge of work processes - Common ground for information gathering, education, raising awareness - Deepened mutual understanding of each other's situation and more respect for other views - People appreciate the whole and their part in it; more appreciation of the shop floor - Individuals understand the organisation's objective, they know its strategy, how it is doing and who their customers and competitors are	

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
5.3. Commitment and energy for change, better implementation	- Less barriers, more enthusiasm and support for the change process - People are committed to do something together, getting diverse interest groups together discussing real issues; action groups are viable - Players take responsibility for the issue - Engagement with outcome, better acceptance of conclusions, designs or redesigns - Increased building of trust enables personal action - Decreased polarisation	- action plans: how shallow/penetrating/profound
5.4. New relationships, more potential for innovation	- Learning bridges between those in power and other voices, so something new can emerge - Emotional bond between participants - New relationships are created, networks are extended	
5.5. Some elements of LSI are transferred	- Participative follow-up meetings - People start incorporating some elements of LGI in their own meetings (sitting in circles, using talking stick, inviting "strangers", working in small groups, more collective visualisations)	Meeting rooms, meeting agendas, reports
5.6. Efficiency is increased	- Condensation of work, better alignment, less disturbance - Better use of resources and knowledge, substantial savings in time and money - Decreased implementation time	Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - Is efficiency increased? How?
6. Effectiveness: Sustainable effects; LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning	Sustainable effects are transformational; they shift the norms in relationships and communication, showing in transformed capability for change and ongoing learning	
6.1. Collective learning and changing continue, increased capability for change	- Use of LSI or other participative approaches is continued, used for other issues or by other people - Participants learn how to fragment complex problems, how to do their own data-gathering and make system models - Development of capacity to deal with uncertainty and chaotic circumstances - Deepened dialogue between leaders and the entire organisation/system	Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - Were there more LGIs, or 'microcosm practices' ? Why?

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	- Increased self-organising capacity; empowerment shows in self-management, more distributed leadership - Improved capacity to work with the principles; increased capacity to cross boundaries of levels and functions; design ideas can come from anyone	- Is leadership more distributed? How?
6.2. Increased reflective self awareness	- Self-evaluation among leaders is conducted to reflect on progress and required example behaviour - Discussions with stakeholders on what is working or not are included in meeting agendas - Reflective questions are asked in meetings, distinctions between lived and spoken beliefs are explored - Teams learn to review and evaluate their performance - "Noise" in the change process is explored and amplified: does it help or hinder the process - The way of interaction is reflected: time for stopping and reflection is taken - Profound mind-set shifts for some people	💬 Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - How are processes evaluated? - How is interaction evaluated? - Did new words, new language, arise as a result of the process?
6.3. More permeable boundaries: opening up the organisation, inviting diversity; focus on how good the system is; more systemic thinking	- Development of a shared perspective on their own system with stakeholders is continued for other issues - Cross-functional teams have decision-making power, shared decision-making in action teams - Stakeholder or customer review for input in progress - Increase of participation of often excluded groups - Increased ability to work with diversity: relevant diversity is identified and valued, different views are not minimised or discounted - Microcosm practices continue: large group meetings, deep divers, checkpoints, reunions, action teams	💬 Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - Do you meet differently as a result of the process? Do you communicate differently? - How are stakeholders involved? - Are there any new structures or management systems made as a result of the process?
6.4. New structures sustain ongoing participation in change	- Creation of a delivery system to avoid dead zone after short-term success; action groups remain viable - Shift of policy decisions; leaders are more aware of the need of the ground level to make policies actually work; better balance between top-down and bottom-up decision-making - Employees are able to influence important organisational decisions concerning their own	

Factors	Indicators	Evaluation method
	work, such as work methods, strategy, coordination - Communities of practice are established, new networks - Tools learned during the event are used to ensure continued learning - Ongoing participation in new partnerships and collaborations - Management systems changed, especially human resource systems, that build and support the new culture - Progress is monitored, feedback provided, midcourse corrections and directions changed - Role of work councils shifts from participation to helping to organise participation - Leaders are coached in their roles in the change process	
6.5. Communication is more direct and constructive	- Meetings with an "engagement edge": more efficient, effective and participative - Shift from one-way to two-way communication between levels and functions - Unusual or unexpected message approaches to keep awareness high - Different modalities (play, pictures, interaction technology) are used - New language that expresses mutual understanding - Negative feelings expressed in conversations about an issue change from fear or anger to sadness or frustration	
7. Risks: Possible undesired effects	- Cynicism and greater resistance to change - Loss of trust in participative processes, *frustration about unfulfilled expectations* - Apathy among some people, awaiting further action of leaders, to get relief of responsibility - Withdrawal of champions after the conference event - Not enough time for follow-up; dissipating energy and frustration when people return to their demanding workplaces even when the follow-up seemed ok - People agree only at a high level of abstraction doing relatively minor, non-controversial projects - Discouragement among people who were not invited - Increased power game, increased distrust, decline of open communication - Collusive climate, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate	💬 Client, sponsor, participants, non-participants, consultant - Were there any undesired effects? Which?

Appendix 3: Tools for evaluation of past LSIs

Appendix 3.1: Audit Matrix: Questions and sources for evidence of the effectiveness

Nr.	Factors	Client	Project leader	Consultant	Part. Pl. Gr.	Part. Conf.	Contract	Rep. Pl. Group	Design	Invitations	Conf. Rep.	Other
1.	**Context/Task**											
1.1	What was the intention of the LSI?	x	x	x	x					x	x	
1.2	How participative was the LSI? (choose on chart)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
2.	**Client**											
2.1	What made you say *Yes* to this contract? Were did you say *No* to?	x	x	x								
2.2	What were your expectations at the beginning of the LSI?	x	x	x								
2.3	Were you prepared to support follow up? Did you?	x	x									
3.	**Consultant**											
3.1	Why did you choose for LSI?	x	x	x								
3.2	How do you see your role in the process?	x	x	x								
3.3	What do you consider as your strengths and weaknesses for this process?	x	x	x								
3.4	How were you trained to work with large groups?			x								
3.5	Were there difficult moments for you? What did you do?			x								
4.	**Intervention**											
4.1	Was the conference part of a larger effort?	x					x		x	x		x
4.2	Was it the right time for the process and the conference?	x	x	x	x	x						
4.3	How was the planning team made up?	x	x	x	x			x				
4.4	How was the stakeholder analyses done?	x	x	x	x							
4.5	Was the design coherent with context, task, relations, and directions?	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
4.7	How much work was done by the planning group, how much in the LGI, how much by consultants?	x	x	x	x	x			x			
4.8	Was there a critical mass of the system involved in the overall process?	x	x		x				x	x	x	
4.9	Were the right people in the room at the conference?	x	x	x	x	x			x			
4.10	How was paid attention to (key) stakeholders not present?	x	x	x	x	x						
4.11	Did you feel involved in the process? Why?					x						
	LGI (Conference)											
4.12	Was the purpose and process of the conference clear to you?				x	x				x		
4.13	Did you feel free to come, to participate or not?	x	x		x	x						
4.14	Did you feel free in what and how to contribute?	x	x		x	x						
4.15	How was the whole explored?	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	
4.16	Did you experience a feeling of community?				x	x						
4.17	Did you have fun? Why?	x	x	x	x	x						
4.18	How was action planning done?	x	x	x	x	x			x		x	
4.19	Did the conference setting facilitate the goals of the meeting? How?	x	x	x	x	x						
4.20	Was attention paid to the working principles of the process? How?	x	x	x	x	x			x			
4.21	What moments did stand out for you? Why? (Differences, conflict)	x	x		x	x						
4.22	What did the facilitators do or not do that was important to you?	x	x		x	x						
4.23	How was time managed? Were you satisfied with that?	x	x	x	x	x						
4.24	What did you feel responsible for?				x	x			x	x	x	
4.25	Did the conference work for you? Why?	x	x		x	x						
5.	**Effects first order: short term goals are reached**											
5.1	Did you get what you wanted? Why?	x	x		x	x						x
5.2	Did the consultants accomplish what they set out to do?	x	x	x			x					x
5.3	What do you do different, what changes are made, as a result of the process?	x	x		x	x						x
5.4	What don't you do anymore?	x	x		x	x						x
5.6	Was it worth the effort? Would you do it again?	x	x		x	x						x
6.	**Effects second order: sustainable effects**											
6.1	Were there more LSIs or other participative meetings? Why?	x	x		x	x						x
6.2	What can you do you could not do before as a result of the process?	x	x		x	x						x
6.3	Do you meet differently? (diversity, interactivity, setting, images)	x	x		x	x						x
6.5	Do you communicate differently? (new language, more reflection)	x	x		x	x						x
6.6	How is the process doing? Is it monitored? How?	x	x		x	x						x
7.	**Did you experience undesired effects as a result of the process?**	x	x		x	x						x

Appendix 3.2: Interview outline

1. ***Introduction***

    a. Explain background and intentions of the interview
    b. Explain procedure (open questions, taking notes and recording)
    c. Open interview, all answers are valuable
    d. Explain how results will be used, emphasise that anonymity is guaranteed.

2. ***Main questions***

    a. The questions from the Audit Matrix (see Appendix 3.1).

3. ***Conclusions***

    a. What conclusions on the effectiveness can be drawn? Summarise and check conclusions
    b. What could have made the process (even) more effective?

4. ***Closing***

    a. Explain how the evaluation process will continue, how results will be presented
    b. Thank you for cooperating.

Appendix 3.3: Score Table: Analysing evidence for the effectiveness

Note: This is only the first page of the detailed scores, on the level of indicators; the full Score Table is available on www.tonnievanderzouwen.nl/wiki .
The scores in this sample page are derived from Case 1

Score table LSI:	+ = complying - = not complying 0 = partly											
Nr.	**Factors and indicators**	**Observables**										
		Client	**Project leader**	**Consultant 1**	**Consultant 2**	**Part. Pl. Gr.**	**LGI part. 1**	**LGI part. 2**	**Designs**	**Reports**	**Other observ.**	**Overall score**	**Remarks**
1.	**Context/Task: LSI is the right approach**												
1.1	**The task is important**												
1.1.1	A leader with an itch to scratch, a compelling business purpose	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+			
1.1.2	An urgent problem or issue, business as usual is not a viable option	-		-	-					-			
1.1.3	A super ordinate goal or shared concern	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					
1.1.4	Multilevel issues	+	+	+	+								
1.1.5	The expected benefits must outweigh the costs	+	+	+	+								
1.2	**Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task**	+	+	+	+	+	+						
1.2.1	No one of the stakeholders can do alone what they can to together			+	+	+				+			
1.2.2	Need for joint problem definition and strategy in diversity and conflict				-	+							
1.2.3	A basic willingness to work together, awareness that collaboration is necessary	+	+	+	+	+							
1.3	**Situation is complex and/or uncertain**												
1.3.1	A high level of fragmentation			+	+	+				+			
1.3.2	Uncertain, fast changing situations												
1.3.3	Multiple complexities and ambiguities to deal with, nobody could possibly know all the details or the answer												
1.3.4	The change is transformational	+	+	+	+	+							
1.3.5	Unprecedented or breakthrough changes call for unprecedented or breakthrough action												
1.4	**Contra indications context/task**												
1.4.1	Issue is not important to anyone	+	+	+	+	+	+			+			
1.4.2	Task is abstract and likely to lead to talk without action	+	+	+	+	+							
1.4.3	One way information transfer is required (confidentiality, loss of face, knowledge transfer)	+	+	+	+								
1.4.4	Individual professionals can solve the problem	+	+	+	+	+							
1.4.5	No opportunity for change, by lack of resources, energy, time, or lack of actual influence	+	+	+	+	+							
2.	**Client: Leaders support the LSI approach**												
2.1	**Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power**												
	Leaders:												
2.1.1	Have good intentions	+	+	+	+	+							
2.1.2	Are credible, no hidden agendas	+	+	+	+	+							
2.1.3	Show willingness to work from a shared power base to achieve shared ownership	+	+	+	+	+							*Part of the board did not*
2.1.4	Believe that collaboration is more likely to stimulate follow up	+	+		+	+							
2.1.5	Tolerate uncertainty, are able to stay with "not knowing"	+	+	+	+	+							
2.1.6	Minimize the influence of power differences and adopt a neutral position	+	+	+	+								
2.1.7	Allow local control and establish clear boundaries	+		+	0								
2.1.8	Are willing to live with the outcome	+	+	+	+								

Appendix 3.4: Score Chart, overview of the effectiveness for one LSI

Score Chart, overview for one LSI							
	++= very good + = good			0 = partly complying	- = poor	- - = very poor	
Nr.	**Factors and indicators**	**+ +**	**+**	**0**	**-**	**- -**	***Remarks***
1.	**Context/Task: LSI is the right approach**						
1.1	The task is important						
1.2	Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task						
1.3	Complex and/or uncertain situation						
1.4	Contra indications context/task						*Score positive if no contra-indications*
2.	**Client: Leaders support the LSI approach**						
2.1	Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power						
2.2	Are willing to spent time and money to do it "by the book"						
2.3	Political climate has enough trust to start						
2.4	Contra indications client						*Score positive if no contra-indications*
3.	**Consultant: Facilitators are skilled to conduct an LSI**						
3.1	Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client						
3.2	Facilitators gain credibility, managing expectations						
3.3	Facilitators are aware of their own role						
3.4	Facilitators have skills to work with large groups						
3.5	Faciliators believe in the principles of LSI						
3.6	Contra indications consultant						*Score positive if no contra-indications*
4.	**Intervention: LSI is performed right**						
4.1	Large group meeting (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort						
4.2	Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics						
4.3	Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions						
4.4	Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI						
4.5	Representation: consideration to those who are not present; contact is supported by the larger social system						
4.6	LGI enables everyone's contributions by inclusiveness and building trust						
4.7	Structure of the LGI: Explore the whole, engaging new connections, building a common database of the system						
4.8	Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management						
4.9	Convergence: Tapping into collective intelligence						
4.10	Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process, symbolizes the principles of LSI						
4.11	Action planning for next steps starts in the LGI, or if more appropriate, soon after the LGI						
4.12	Reflection on conditions and principles with participants LGI						
4.13	Building of capacity to work participatory during the LSI						
4.14	LGI is managed well by facilitators						
4.15	Building of a post-event support structure, during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated						
4.16	Contra indications to hold the LGI						*Score positive if no contra-indications*

Score Chart, overview for one LSI								
	++= very good + = good	0 = partly complying				- = poor	- - = very poor	
5.	**Effectiveness: Short term effects; LSI contributes to getting more and better work done**							
5.1	LSI is considered worth the effort; short term objectives are met							
5.2	Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context							
5.3	Commitment and energy for change, better implementation							
5.4	New relationships, more potential for innovation and learning							
5.5	Some elements of LSI are transferred							
5.6	Efficiency is increased							
6.	**Effectiveness: Sustainable effects; LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning**							
6.1	Collective learning and changing continue, increasing capability to change							
6.2	Increased reflective self awareness							
6.3	More permeable boundaries: Opening up the organization, inviting diversity; the circle gets bigger, focus on how good the system is							
6.4	New structures sustain ongoing participations in change							
6.5	Communication is more direct and constructive							
7.	**Risks: possible undesired effects**						*Score positive if no undesired effects*	
7.1	Cynicism and greater resistance to change							
7.2	Apathy among some people, awaiting further action of leaders							
7.3	Frustration about unfulfilled expectations							
7.4	Withdrawal of champions after the conference event							
7.5	Not enough time for follow up; dissipating energy and frustration when people return to their demanding workplaces even when the follow up seemed ok							
7.6	People agree only at a high level of abstraction doing relatively minor, non-controversial projects							
7.7	Discouragement among people who were not invited							
7.8	Increased power game							
7.9	Increased distrust, decline of open communication							
7.10	Collusive climate							
7.11	Conflict, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate							
7.12	Dead zone: switch to other work to get relief of responsibility and make up for undone work							
7.13	Waste of time and money							

Appendix 3.5: Evaluation example from the three test Cases

This example concerns the evaluation of the three test Cases, as described in Section 7.1. The evaluation is performed two years after the ending of the LSI. The evaluation is done following next steps:

1. Gathering information: interviews are planned with key players, asking for relevant documents, making observations, according to the *Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1*
2. Conducting open interviews with key players, recording the interviews with a voice recorder and making notes. The *Interview Outline of Appendix 3.2* and the *Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1* were used as guideline.
3. Transcription of the interview recordings[3].
4. Text analyses of notes, interview transcriptions, and relevant documents with text markers of different colours for each of the main categories in success factors and effects, as described in Section 6.3, using the *Audit Matrix of Appendix 3.1*
5. Scoring of the indicators of success factors and effects, using the *Score Table of Appendix3.3*
6. Summarising the scores on a Score Chart for each case, using the *Score Chart of Appendix 3.6*
7. Making an overview of results, indicating scores as seen in the *Table of Appendix 3.7*
8. Write a description of results and conclusions about the effectiveness, see *Table with conclusions on the effectiveness of the three test Cases of Appendix 3.8.*

[3] Note: Full transcription is done to develop the evaluation tools. For future evaluation listening to the recording and making notes will be sufficient.

Appendix 3.6: The Score Chart for a specific LSI, example of Case 3

Note: This is only the first part of the Score Chart of Case 3

Score table LSI for Case 3							
	++= very good + = good			0 = partly complying	- = poor	- - = very poor	
Nr.	**Factors and indicators**	**++**	**+**	**0**	**-**	**- -**	***Remarks***
1.	**Context/Task: LSI is the right approach**						
1.1	The task is important		+				
1.2	Interdependant participants, participation is required		+				
1.3	Complex and/or uncertain situation		+				
1.4	Contra indications context/task		+	0			*Traumatic experience with previous change process with predecessors of leaders*
2.	**Client: Leaders support the LSI approach**						
2.1	Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power		+				
2.2	Are willing to spent time and money to do it "by the book"		+				
2.3	Political climate has enough trust to start		+				
2.4	Contra indications client		+				
3.	**Consultant: Facilitators are skilled to conduct an LSI**						
3.1	Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client	++					*A lot of discussion with client and planning group to match process, expectations and circumstances*
3.2	Facilitators gain credibility, managing expectations	++					
3.3	Facilitators are aware of their own role		+				
3.4	Facilitators have skills to work with large groups		+				
3.5	Faciliators believe in the principles of LSI		+				
3.6	Contra indications consultant		+				
4.	**Intervention: LSI is performed right**						
4.1	Large group meeting (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort		+				
4.2	Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics		+				
4.3	Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions		+				*A bit more time for the LGI, it was a long and full day*
4.4	Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI		+				

Appendix 3.7: Overview of scores for the three test cases

Scores of success factors of the three test cases

+ = complying	++ = strong point
- = not complying	-- = weak point
0 = partly complying	+/- = disagreement

Nr.	Success factors	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
1.	**Context/Task: LSI is the right approach**			
1.1	The task is important	+	+	+
1.2	Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task	++	+/--	+
1.3	Complex and/or uncertain situation	+	+	+
1.4	*Contra indications context/task*	++	+	+
2.	**Client: Leaders support the LSI approach**			
2.1	Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power	+	+	+
2.2	Are willing to spent time and money to do it "by the book"	+	+	+
2.3	Political climate has enough trust to start	+	0	+
2.4	*Contra indications client*	++	+	+
3.	**Consultant: Facilitators are skilled to conduct an LSI**			
3.1	Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client	+	-	++
3.2	Facilitators gain credibility, managing expectations	+	-	++
3.3	Facilitators are aware of their own role	+	0	+
3.4	Facilitators have skills to work with large groups	+	0	+
3.5	Faciliators believe in the principles of LSI	+	+	+
3.6	*Contra indications consultant*	+	--	+
4.	**Intervention: LSI is performed right**			
4.1	Large group meeting (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort	+	+	+
4.2	Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics	+	-	+
4.3	Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions	++	+/--	+
4.4	Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI	+	-	+
4.5	Representation: consideration to those who are not present; contact is supported by the larger social system	+	+	+
4.6	LGI enables everyone's contributions by inclusiveness and building trust	+	-	+
4.7	Divergence: Explore the whole before fixing any parts, building a common database of the system	+	+	+
4.8	Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management	+	+	+
4.9	Convergence: Tapping into collective intelligence	+	0	0
4.10	Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process, symbolizes the principles of LSI	+	0	+
4.11	Action planning for next steps starts in the LGI, or if more appropriate, soon after the LGI	0	+	+
4.12	Reflection on conditions and principles with participants LGI	-	-	+
4.13	Building of capacity to work participatory during the LSI	-	-	0
4.14	LGI is managed well by facilitators	++	0	+
4.15	Building of a post-event support structure, during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated	0	++	+
4.16	*Contra indications to hold the LGI*	+	--	+

Scores of effects of the three test cases

+ = complying	++ = strong point
- = not complying	-- = weak point
0 = partly complying	+/- = disagreement

Nr.	Effects	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
5.	**Non sustainable effects: LSI contributes to getting more and better work done**			
5.1	Short term objectives of client are met	+	+	++
5.2	Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context	+	0	+
5.3	Commitment and energy for change, better implementation	+	0	++
5.4	New relationships, more potential for innovation and learning	+	-	0
5.5	Some elements of LSI are transferred	+	0	+
5.6	Efficiency is increased	0	0	+
6.	**Sustainable effects: LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning**			
6.1	Collective learning and changing continue, increasing capability to change	+	0	+
6.2	Increased reflective self awareness	+	0	+
6.3	More permeable boundaries: Opening up the organization, inviting diversity; focus on how good the system is	+	0	+
6.4	New structures sustain ongoing participations in change	-	+	+
6.5	Communication is more direct and constructive	0	0	0
7.	**Risks: possible undesired effects**			
7.1	Cynicism and greater resistance to change	+	0	+
7.2	Apathy among some people, awaiting further action of leaders	+	0	+
7.3	Frustration about unfulfilled expectations	0	-	0
7.4	Withdrawal of champions after the conference event	+	++	++
7.5	Not enough time for follow up; dissipating energy and frustration when people return to their demanding workplaces even when the follow up seemed ok	-	+	++
7.6	People agree only at a high level of abstraction doing relatively minor, non-controversial projects	+	+	++
7.7	Discouragement among people who were not invited	-	+	++
7.8	Increased power game	+	+	++
7.9	Increased distrust, decline of open communication	+	+	++
7.10	Collusive climate	+	+	+
7.11	Conflict, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate	+	+	0
7.12	Dead zone: switch to other work to get relief of responsibility and make up for undone work	+	0	+
7.13	Waste of time and money	+	+	++

Appendix 3.8: Table with conclusions on the effectiveness of the three test Cases

Subject	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
System type	Organisation with 24 public primary schools in one city in the Netherlands	Organisation with 55 public primary schools in another city in the Netherlands	Organisation with 8 public libraries in a rural region in the Netherlands
Goal LSI	Involve parents in envisioning what the best schools look like	Awareness of collective responsibility for negative trend in pupil numbers	Internal reorganisation of public libraries to improve coordination and division of work
Longer term goal	Become the best school organisation in this part of the country	Structural improvement of attractiveness of schools, growth of pupil numbers	More power for development
Strong points	- Fit with task and context - Client believes in LSI - Way of working in the planning group - Design and facilitation LGI	- Urgent and important task - Decisive client - Follow-up with tailor made support for schools	- Efforts of consultant to match process, expectations and circumstances - Way of working in the project group
Weak points		- School directors do not need each other - Facilitators wanted to sell LSI - Existing group, already planned meeting - Important stakeholder groups were missing	-
Non-sustainable effects	- Input for long-term vision - Extra budget for school improvement - Initiation of new concepts - More awareness of the system	- Pupil numbers are rising, image is improving - Awareness, commitment and efficiency are increased in part of the group	- Fast and relatively easy implementation of new structure - Commitment for change - Increased trust

Subject	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Sustainable effects	- More participative meetings - Participation of stakeholders continues - Other people start participative processes in the organisation	- A little increase of capacity to work participatively for some participants - New structures for acquisition and involvement of stakeholders	- Staff learned how to combine top-down and bottom-up decision-making - Increased self awareness - More permeable boundaries - Development process continues participatively
Undesired effects	- Frustration about lack of time for follow-up, due to other developments	- Frustration with participants who had expected more	- Sadness about loss of interesting work for some employees
Overall conclusion	A successful LSI. The primary goals of the project are reached. Relations with parents are improved. Capacity to work participatively is increased, and it ripples off. Focus could have been less on the conference and more on the bigger process.	Views differ about the effectiveness. Client and consultants think the LSI was a good start. Most effects are attributed to follow-up actions and decisiveness of the staff. Performance of consultants was not optimal. Sustainable effects are minimal.	A well-performed and successful LSI. Major success factors were the support of the client and the constant focus on the principles of the consultant. Capacity for change and learning is increased.

Appendix 4: Sources of reported success factors and effects

Authors	Testimonials of LSI cases in books and articles
Adams & Adams, 1999	Impact of deregulation, MichCon gas-distribution company, USA.
Axelrod & Axelrod, 2006	Embedding the Core Principles at Boeing, USA
Axelrod, 1992	Getting Everyone Involved: How One Organisation Involved Its Employees, Supervisors, and Managers in Redesigning the Organisation
Babüroğlu, 1992	Tracking the Development of the Emery-Trist Systems Paradigm (ETSP)
Bailey & Dupré, 2006	The Future Search Conference as a Vehicle for Educational Change: A Shared Vision for Will Rogers Middle School, Sacramento, California
Barbeau & Aronson, 2006	From fragmentation to coherence, University of South California, USA
Boos & Königswieser, 2000	Unterwegs auf einem schmalen Grat: Großgruppen in Veränderungsprozes-sen
Brown, 2001	The World Café: Catalysing Collaborative Learning and Collective Intelligence
Bunker & Alban, 1992a	Editors' Introduction: The Large Group Intervention-A New Social Innovation
Bunker & Alban, 2005	Introduction to the Special Issue on Large Group Interventions
Bunker & Alban, 2006	Reflections on cases
Cherns, 1987	Principles of Sociotechnical Design Revisited
Cheung-Judge & Powley, 2006	Innovation at the BBC: Engaging an entire organisation, UK
(Clarke, 2005)	Transorganisation Development for Network Building
Crombie, 1985	The Nature and Types of Search Conferences
Dannemiller & Jacobs, 1992	Changing the Way Organisations Change: A Revolution of Common Sense
DannemillerTyson, 2000	Whole-Scale Change: Unleashing the Magic in Organisations
Eijbergen, 2002	Werkconferenties: Ontmoetingsplaats voor verandering
Eijbergen, 2007	Organiserend veranderen of veranderend organiseren (Chapter Grote-groepsinterventies)
Eoyang & Quade, 2006	After the dance, criteria for success
Fullerton & Palermo, 2008	Evaluation of a Large Group Method in an Educational Institution: The World Café versus Large Group Facilitation
Gilmore & Barnett, 1992	Designing the Social Architecture of Participation in Large Groups to Effect Organisational Change
Gilmore & Bing, 2006	Tools for effective transitions using large group processes
Glouberman, 2003	The Psychoanalytic Implications of Open Space
Granata, 2005	An assessment of Search Conferences: Citizen participation and civic engage-ment in turbulent times
Gray, 1989	Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems (Jossey Bass Business and Management Series)

Authors	Testimonials of LSI cases in books and articles
Grieten, Lambrechts & Corthouts, 2006	Lessen uit een grote groepsinterventie
Groot, 2006	From strategic planning to Open Space in East Africa
Holman & Devane, 1999	The Change Handbook: Group Methods for Shaping the Future
Huxham & Vangen, 2000	Leadership in the Shaping and Implementation of Collaboration Agendas: How Things Happen in a (not quite) joined-up World
Königswieser, 2000	Das Feuer großer Gruppen. Konzepte, Designs, Praxisbeispiele für Großveranstaltungen.
Leith, 2008	The future of Open Space
Lent, van Patten & Phair 2006	Creation a world-class manufacturer in record time, E&C, USA
Lukensmeyer & Brigham, 2005	Taking Democracy to Scale: Large Scale Interventions - for Citizens
Manning & DelaCerda, 2006	Whole systems change in Mexican organisations
Martens, Schweiz & Oleari, 2006	Training Indonesian facilitators to lead community planning for women and children
Nistelrooij, 1999	Collectief organiseren: een sociaal-constructionistisch onderzoek naar het werken met grote groepen
(Nistelrooij, 2004)	Sociale perceptie als insteek voor systeem brede organisatieverandering: veranderen volgens een sociaal-constructionistische strategie
Nistelrooij, Wilde & Geverink, 2002	Large Scale Intervention: Enkel onderzoeksbevindingen naar de toepassing van Real Time Strategic Change
Oels, 2002	Investigating the Emotional Roller-Coaster Ride: A Case Study-Based Assessment of the Future Search Conference Design
Owen, 1997	Open Space Technology: A User's Guide
Pedler et al. ,2003	Leading Change: A Guide to Whole Systems Working
Peterson & Peterson, 2006	Moving to the next level at the Canadian Institute for Health Information
Polanyi, 2002	Communicative Action in Practice: Future search and the Pursuit of an Open, Critical and Non-coercive Large-Group Process
Schmidt Weber & Manning, 1998	A Comparative Framework for Large Group Organisational Change Interventions
Schruijer & Vansina, 2004	The dynamics of multiparty collaboration and leadership
Schruijer, 2001	'Bringing the whole system in a room': a participant's perspective
Schruijer 2006	Research on Collaboration in Action
Seel, 2001	Anxiety and Incompetence in Large Groups
Sorrow, 2006	Work Out: From courtship to marriage at General Electric
Steil & Gibbons –Carr, 2005	Large Group Scenario Planning: Scenario Planning with the Whole System in the Room
Tan & Brown, 2005	The World Café in Singapore
(Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001)	The Paradox of Multi-stakeholder Collaborative Roundtables

Authors	Testimonials of LSI cases in books and articles
Tyler, Valek & Roland, 2006	Graphic facilitation and Large Group Methods
Weber, 2000	Power to the people!? Selbstorganisation, Systemlernen und Strategiebildung mit großen Gruppen
Weisbord & Janoff, 2005	Faster, Shorter, Cheaper May be Simple; It's Never Easy (Ikea story)
Weisbord & Janoff, 2008	Future Search: Getting a Vision, Strategic Plan and High Commitment to Act in a Single Meeting (draft of Weisbord and Janoff 2010)
Weisbord, 2004a	Productive Workplaces revisited (story Medical School, table 'follow-up' on p. 458)
White, 2002	Size matters: Large Group Methods and the process of operational research

Personal conversations and interviews, occasion	Persons involved
Open Space session during the Learning Exchange of the Future Search Network, Johannesburg, South Africa, November 2007	5
Interview with Marvin Weisbord, founding father of Future Search during the workshop Managing a Future Search, in Tampere, Finland, August 2008	1
Group interview during SoL Global Conference, Muscat, Oman, April 2008	7
Learning Souq conversations during SoL Global Conference, Muscat, Oman, April 2008	22
Total number of persons	**35**

Websites and e-mails of networks	Network
www.futuresearch.net	Future Search Network
searchnet@list.nea.org	Future Search Network
www.openspaceworld.org	Open Space Technology
OSLIST@LISTSERV.BOISESTATE.EDU	Open Space Technology
www.theworldcafe.com	The World Café Community
www.all-in-one-spirit.de	Newsletter of Facilitator group of Matthias zur Bonsen, Germany

Appendix 5: Research Plan

Phases and questions	Activities	Results	Goals
1. Exploring the field - What do we already know about the effects of LSI in the longer term? What are 'fields to explore'? - What do we have to look for? What do practitioners consider valid measures/observables for sustainable effects, e.g. collective learning? What questions should we ask in our interviews and case studies? - Who has more information, who should we involve in the next steps of this field study?	- literature study	- reference list - first description of the 'state of the art'	- Describe the state of the art
	- research labs with 'experts'	- criteria for effects - questions for further exploration - information about cases, sites, documents, contacts, ongoing research … - network of professional practitioners	- immersion in the field
	- keeping a diary for reflections	- reflections on inquiry process	
	- keeping a journal of actions and results	- report of the journey	
	- writing up results so far	- concept overview of 'the state of the art'	
	- member check by e-mail and internet	- validated overview of 'the state of the art	
			- validation of findings - build a network for validation of research findings
	- writing up results of this phase	- list of potential cases - criteria for case study - a Wiki as a tool to follow and/or participate in the research process	- honour participants - dissemination of insights
2. Building the evaluation instrument - **What are success factors and effects of LSI?** - **How can they be observed in practice?**	- Text analysis of reported cases in literature - Interviews with experienced practitioners - Ad methods for assessment of compliance	Evaluation Instrument comprising: - Evaluation Table with a categorised list of success factors and effects, with observable indicators and methods to assess compliance with criteria - tools to assess a concrete LSI before, during or after the trajectory: Audit Matrix, Score Table - audit procedure	- Building an evaluation instrument to assess the effectiveness of concrete LSIs
3. Case selection - Where can I find sustainable effects of LSI? - How can they be observed?	- case selection, based on criteria of phase 1 - selection of 3 LSIs - acquiring entrance	- 3 cases: 2 with a reputation of success, 1 less successful - contact persons	- gaining entry for case study

Phases and questions	Activities	Results	Goals
	to sites for retrospective evaluation		
4. Case study - What effects do participants experience, after LSI-trajectories? - What are the working elements in the process? - What relations can be seen between working elements and effects?	Retrospective inquiry on site by: - open, in depth, interviews with participants - gathering of observables for analyses - analysing of agreements, context conditions, designs, reports and other observables - analysing measures for effects	- case descriptions - interview reports - retrospective insights in effects - diary and journal of the inquirer - Score Tables - conclusions on the effectiveness cases for sustainable change	- gathering data - testing the instrument for evaluation - evaluate the effectiveness of past LSIs
5. Improving the instrument	- correct and clarify factors, indicators and evaluation procedure	- Improved Audit matrix - Improved Score Tables - Improved Evaluation table with audit methods - Concept of a practical guide	- improve the evaluation instrument
6. Member check conference - Is the evaluation instrument adequate? - Is the evaluation instrument usable?	- organise two conference with stakeholders (practitioners, clients, researchers) - improve the evaluation instrument	- report conferences - validated and improved evaluation instrument - insight usability of the instrument - insight into dilemmas on Evidence based Consultancy	- validation - check and improve usability
7. Interpretation and conceptualization - What can we learn from this study for the practice of LSI? - What are the insights about the effectiveness of LSI? - What are the insights for the development of collective learning? - What are insights for intervention research? - What can we learn about the research process for evaluation of interactive trajectories with LSI? - What are insights for the use of a practical guide in Evidence Based Consultancy?	- analyses and interpretation of results - invite stakeholders to reflect on the outcomes - compare results and conclusions to other theories about strategies for change, and collective learning	- dissertation reporting the research process of the building of the practical guide and the practical guide or evaluate when and how LSI is effective for sustainable change - validation and dissemination of findings - article (Zouwen 2010b) - website www.tonnievanderzouwen.nl/wiki	- answering the research questions - reflection on the process of the field study - recommendations for further research - dissemination of insights

Appendix 6: Score Chart post-evaluation of LSIs, and assessments of preconditions of 4 LSIs

	+ = complying	++ = strong point										
	- = not complying	-- = weak point										
	0 = partly complying	+/- = disagreement										
Nr.	**Success factors Reference evaluator**	**Case 1 Zouwen**	**Case 2 Zouwen**	**Case 3 Zouwen**	**Case 4 Poppe-laars**	**Case 5 Poppe-laars**	**Case 6 Adema**	**Case 7 Mortel**	**Case 8 Hummel**	**Case 9 Hummel**	**Case 10 Hummel**	**Case 11 Hummel**
1.	**Context/Task: LSI is the right approach**											
1.1	The task is important	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	+	+	+	++
1.2	Stakeholders need each other to succeed with this task	++	+/--	+	++	++	+	++	0	0	+	++
1.3	Complex and/or uncertain situation	+	+	+	0	++	+	++	++	0	++	++
1.4	*Contra indications context/task*	++	+	+	--	--	+	++	+	+	+	
2.	**Client: Leaders support the LSI approach**											
2.1	Leaders are willing to collaborate, to share power	+	+	+	0	0	+	++	?	++	++	0
2.2	Are willing to spent time and money to do it "by the book"	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	++	+
2.3	Political climate has enough trust to start	+	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0
2.4	*Contra indications client*	++	+	+	--	-	0	+	+	+	+	+
3.	**Consultant: Facilitators are skilled to conduct an LSI**											
3.1	Facilitators make and keep a clear contract with the client	+	-	++	+	0	+	++	+	+	+	++
3.2	Facilitators gain credibility, managing expectations	+	-	++	+	0	+	++	++	++	++	+
3.3	Facilitators are aware of their own role	+	0	+	0	?	+	+	?	+	+	+
3.4	Facilitators have skills to work with large groups	+	0	+	+	-	0	++	?	+	+	+
3.5	Faciliators believe in the principles of LSI	+	+	+	+	0	+	++	+	+	+	+
3.6	*Contra indications consultant*	+	--	+	-	-	+	0	+	+	+	+
4.	**Intervention: LSI is performed right**											
4.1	Large group meeting (LGI) is planned as part of a larger effort	+	+	+	+	+	0	+				
4.2	Work with a planning group with a representation of stakeholders for all essential decisions regarding design, management and logistics	+	-	+	-	0	+	++				
4.3	Design of LSI and LGI is coherent with context, task, relations and directions	++	+/--	+	0	+	0	++				
4.4	Participants: getting the right people in the room for the LGI	+	-	+	--	+	+	++				
4.5	Representation: consideration to those who are not present; contact is supported by the larger social system	+	+	+	+	-	+	+				
4.6	LGI enables everyone's contributions by inclusiveness and building trust	+	-	+	+	+	0	++				
4.7	Divergence: Explore the whole before fixing any parts, building a common database of the system	+	+	+	0	0	+	++				
4.8	Leadership is distributed by shared responsibility and self-management	+	+	+	0	0	-	++				
4.9	Convergence: Tapping into collective intelligence	+	0	0	-	0	+	++				
4.10	Conference setting for the LGI facilitates the process, symbolizes the principles of LSI	+	0	+	++	+	+	++				
4.11	Action planning for next steps starts in the LGI, or if more appropriate, soon after the LGI	0	+	+	++	0	+	++				
4.12	Reflection on conditions and principles with participants LGI	-	-	+	0	0	0	++				
4.13	Building of capacity to work participatory during the LSI	-	-	0	0	?	+	+				
4.14	LGI is managed well by facilitators	++	0	+	0	+	0	++				
4.15	Building of a post-event support structure, during the LSI a delivery system for change is made or initiated	0	++	+	0	0	+	++				
4.16	*Contra indications to hold the LGI*	+	--	+	--	-	+	++				
Nr.	**Effects**											
5.	**Non sustainable effects: LSI contributes to getting more and better work done**											
5.1	Short term objectives of client are met	+	+	++	--	-	++	++				
5.2	Increased awareness and understanding of the system and context	+	0	+	--	-	+	++				
5.3	Commitment and energy for change, better implementation	+	0	++	0	0	+	++				
5.4	New relationships, more potential for innovation and learning	+	-	0	0	+	+	+				
5.5	Some elements of LSI are transferred	+	0	+	-	0	++	++				
5.6	Efficiency is increased	0	0	+	--	--	?	+				
6.	**Sustainable effects: LSI contributes to transformed capability for change and learning**											
6.1	Collective learning and changing continue, increasing capability to change	+	0	+	-	-	+	++				
6.2	Increased reflective self awareness	+	0	+	-	0	+	++				
6.3	More permeable boundaries: Opening up the organization, inviting diversity; focus on how good the system is	+	0	+	--	--	+	++				
6.4	New structures sustain ongoing participations in change	-	+	+	--	--	0	++				
6.5	Communication is more direct and constructive	0	0	0	?	-	?	+				
7.	**Risks: possible undesired effects**											
7.1	Cynicism and greater resistance to change	+	0	+	-	--	+	0				
7.2	Apathy among some people, awaiting further action of leaders	+	0	+	--	--	+	0				
7.3	Frustration about unfulfilled expectations	0	-	0	0	--	+	0				
7.4	Withdrawal of champions after the conference event	+	++	++	-	--	+	0				
7.5	Not enough time for follow up; dissipating energy and frustration when people return to their demanding workplaces even when the follow up seemed ok	-	+	++	--	--	+	0				
7.6	People agree only at a high level of abstraction doing relatively minor, non-controversial projects	+	+	++	--	--	+	0				
7.7	Discouragement among people who were not invited	-	+	++	?	?	+	0				
7.8	Increased power game	+	+	++	--	--	+	0				
7.9	Increased distrust, decline of open communication	+	+	++	?	?	+	?				
7.10	Collusive climate	+	+	+	--	--	+	0				
7.11	Conflict, overemphasis of group interests at the expense of the personal affiliate	+	+	0								
7.12	Dead zone: switch to other work to get relief of responsibility and make up for undone work	+	0	+								
7.13	Waste of time and money	+	+	++								

Appendix 7: Perspectives on sustainable change compared to the Logic of Feeling

Concept	Non-sustainable change/ first-order effects	Sustainable change/ second-order effects
Logic of Feeling (Cornelis, 1993)	First-order collective learning	Second-order collective learning
Organisational change (Granata, 2005)	Incremental change	Transformational change
Change strategies (Boonstra, 2004b; Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003)	Change	Development of capacity for change, learning how to change
Model I. Model II (Argyris, 1990, 1991)	Model I, single-loop learning	Model II. double and triple loop learning
Collective learning (Wierdsma, 1999)	Enkelslag, dubbelslag leren, positioneel veranderen	Drieslag leren, transformatief veranderen
Complex social responsive theory, different language (Stacey & Griffin, 2005)	More of the same	New set of rules, new possibilities for thinking, understanding, relating.
Organisations as living systems Geus (1997)	Improving structures and procedures	Better and faster decisions in business, capacity to choose
Gaming (Duke & Geurts, 2004; Geurts, et al., 2000; Geurts, Duke, et al., 2007)	Myths, monitoring is problem driven, game	Learning in the face of mystery, play
Wholeness and the implicate order (Bohm, 1980)	Description of reality	A new language
Phases in organisational development (Greiner, 1998)	coordination	collaboration
Eijbergen (2007)	Transactional change, delivering plans	Transformational change, deep change
Quantum model for corporations (Zohar, 1997)	Conflict, control	Dialogue
Logical types of learning, ladder of how to think about patterns that connect (Bateson, 2002)	Learning I, compare the patterns	Learning II (Deutero learning), compare the comparison of patterns

Concept	Non-sustainable change/ first-order effects	Sustainable change/ second-order effects
Bartunek & Moch (1987)	First-order change is incremental, improvements Second-order change: 'phase in' particular schemata, 'phase out' others	Third order change, a new shared awareness of various, identifying different possibilities, reflecting on implications
The biology of knowing Maturana & Varela (1992)	Knowledge	Knowledge of how to use knowledge
Broadening participation (Hosking, 2002)	Power over	Power to

Appendix 8: Development of world views according to the Logic of Feeling

We do not see the world as it is but as we are (Humberto Maturana)

Arnold Cornelis (1993) elaborates his logic on how he sees development for almost every level of human culture. The Logic of Feeling tries to integrate all aspects of life. Figure Appendix 8-1 gives an overview of the development of views on reality, knowledge and science corresponding with the development of the three stability layers in the history of human culture. Cornelis sees a logical order in these stages. He calls them the "dawns" of humankind (Cornelis, 2000).

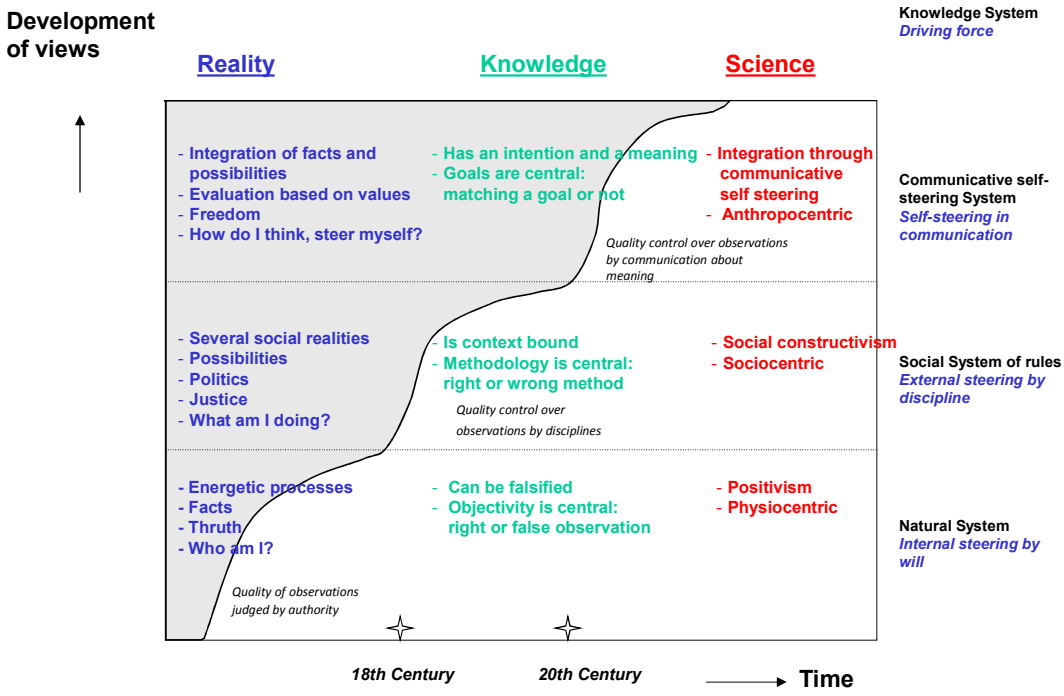

Figure Appendix 8-1: Development of stability systems in human culture over the centuries, and related views on reality, knowledge and science in each system

What story does Figure Appendix 8-1 tell? Over the course of centuries, a shift occurred in philosophy from everything is uncertain, that is why we need myths and stories (pre-modernism), to everything is certain, because it is recorded in natural laws (modernism), to everything is uncertain because reality is only in people's heads (postmodernism, social constructivism).

In modernism, there are people who are right. In post modernism, nobody is right. I argue for reflexivism: from the multiplicity of viewpoints, there are certainties in the Natural System and uncertainties in the Social System. The integration/harmonisation of these two systems is carried out in reflection, in communication. The first question then is not if someone is right, but right for

what, in what system (Wierdsma, 2001). In the Natural System, action is largely predictable, in the Social System it is not. Thus, there is a risk involved in the application of logic from one system to the other. You must specify the system for which something applies.

A living system wants to develop itself, but every system also has a limit to its capacity for steering. Social constructivism does not indicate how the limits of the logic are defined. According to social constructivism (Gergen, 2000; Hosking, 2002), 2002), our images of reality arise without a normative order preceding humankind. There is no criterion outside of the content to determine what is true, what has quality. In my view, it shows boundless arrogance to maintain that there is no reality outside of the content. I share the view that observation is never value-free, but given the restrictions on the human capacity for thought, this fits in well with systems thinking. No single system can know its own boundaries, except via a 'higher', external system. Ergo, it is evident that humanity is part of a greater whole, which we cannot conceive of. Otherwise, we assume that what we cannot see or understand has no influence on our actions. In my opinion, that is not a very scientific stance.

The implicate order
David Bohm (Bohm, 1980) calls this larger whole the generative order, where everything is 'enfolded' in everything. The generative (implicit) order is continuously unfolding itself into what we experience as the visible world (the explicit order). People take part in this unfolding. This philosophy links up with a lot of Eastern philosophy, where the immeasurable is regarded as the primary reality. The entire structure and order of forms that present themselves to observation and reason, is a kind of veil, which covers the primary reality and about which nothing can be said or thought, but which can manifest in feeling. The new can be plucked from nowhere but the random. It requires a selective mechanism to determine what will last (Bateson 2002, p. 41). Bateson uses the word 'latent'. Bohm the word 'implicate'. This links to the concepts of abduction in Grounded Theory, to complexity and to self-organisation.
The implicate order (Bohm, 1980) is the same as 'entropy (Bateson, 2002). Living things grow, they develop over time. Organisations are living systems, they develop over time, so time cannot be left out in models. Products or fixed forms are to be seen as processes as well.

Facts are phenomena accepted by a large body of observers. Knowing 'facts' helps effective action (Cornelis, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Maturana & Varela, 1987). Maturana and Varela (1987) always add the sentence 'as long as it does not disintegrate, as long as it lives'. The same is true for organisations viewed as living systems.

The Natural System results of shared viewpoint of significant group of people in a specific timeframe. The time frame is large enough to be perceived by us as relatively stable, while in fact it is developing slowly. This development escapes our lifetime experience, is described as 'spirit of the times'.

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Summary

Research focus: Building an evidence based practical guide to improve LSI practice

Large Group Intervention Methods have gained their own place in the practice of organisational change and development. Although a large group meeting may be very valuable for short-term effects (the intervention contributes to getting more and better work done), sustainable change (where the intervention contributes to development of collective capacity to change) is not to be expected from a one-time and brief large group event. The large group meetings have to be embedded in a larger participative process namely the Large Scale Intervention (LSI), also known as Whole Systems Change. But when and how is an LSI likely to contribute to sustainable change? What are success factors and how do we know that the time-consuming involvement of stakeholders will be or has been worth the effort?

This book reports how an evidence based practical guide for LSI practice was built, as result of a systematic effort to critically and theoretically assess the available empirical evidence. Part 1 and 2 describe the building process of the guide, presented as an educated, reflective inquiry, and offering a synthesis of LSI practice worldwide. This synthesis was developed over six years of applied social research. Part 3 presents the research outcome in the form of a Practical Guide. This guide contains guidelines and instruments for assessing and discussing conditions and expectations before the start, to facilitate planning and execution during the LSI, and also offers tools for evaluating the effectiveness after an LSI. Part 4 offers insights from the research process, for example, different theoretical perspectives on why LSI works, as well as the pros and cons of evidence based practice in consultancy.

This book is not about 'How to design and perform a large group meeting'. It offers a framework with guidelines for embedding Large Group Interventions when organising for sustainable change; the framework has to be filled in for each specific situation.

Need for synthesis of LSI practice

The high speed of change in the environments of organisations and the increasing complexity of issues to be tackled have contributed to the successful growth of the practice of participative interventions (also called interactive interventions), including LSI practice. Expert solutions may produce good plans, but implementation often falls short because it takes too long, or stakeholders do not feel engaged, and top-down approaches have been proven ineffective in building capacity for change. LSI combines top-down and bottom-up processes, involving stakeholders at every stage of the change trajectory. On one or more occasions, there is a conference with the whole system in the room, the Large Group Intervention.

Many books and articles have been written on how to apply specific Large Group Intervention methods in order to involve stakeholders in the change process. As this study shows, there is by now a lot of narrative, descriptive and even some systematically collected evidence that 'LSI works'. However, this widely scattered information is not readily available to the field. No systematic effort has been undertaken to critically and theoretically assess the available empirical evidence and develop from there practical guidelines for the field. Disappointingly, almost no specific research or interpretive studies are available that focus on the effectiveness for *sustainable* (i.e. lasting) change as claimed in most literature on Large Group Methods. This is important while meanwhile, critique in everyday practice is growing, labelling large group events as 'talk fests' or 'dayflies'. In my opinion, most critique is caused by application of LSI under the wrong conditions, or by bad design or performance. This raises the two main questions this book will answer: "Based on available evidence and theory, when and how is LSI effective for sustainable organisational change?" And: "How can this evidence and theory be translated into a practical guide to the preparation, application and evaluation of Large Scale Interventions?" The aim of the research is to improve the practice of organisational change, especially when the engagement of stakeholders, internal and external, is necessary for success.

Research design and methods: Naturalistic Inquiry

This book tells the story of a research journey. Besides research design, process, results and conclusions, the inquiry also reveals the struggles, the joys, the discoveries, and the surprises that took place during explorative research in the field. In the introduction to the book (Chapter 1), readers have been invited on a journey, an inquiry into a practice called Large Scale Interventions. The journey starts with a sneak preview of a successful and an unsuccessful LSI, to get a feeling for the research questions. The organisations are comparable, the facilitators are the same. What made the difference? How could the effectiveness have been improved? A research journey was prepared (Chapter 2 and 3) to answer these questions. A model for the effectiveness of interventions serves as framework for gathering and analysing success factors and effects of the categories Task/Context, Client, Consultant, Intervention and Effectiveness. In Chapter 3, the research approach and design are discussed extensively. This is very necessary since entering the field of evidence based practice is like walking on 'the razor's edge', as the researcher has to deal with a double scepticism. LSI-practitioners may reject attempts to capture the process in terms of criteria for success, for fear of losing the art and mystery of the process. Academic empiricists may be of the opinion that only experimentation and objective data can contribute to theory, asking for a linear one-variable approach. The chosen approach can be described as an empirical field study, using a Naturalistic Inquiry methodology, a form of applied social science. The research design includes multiple methods and sources for data-gathering and analyses, looking for patterns that connect rather than linear logic between variables in order to acknowledge the richness and complexity of the intervention and of everyday organisational life.

What is LSI? Exploring the state of the art of LSI

The first stop in the journey is taking time to explore the state of the art of LSI (Chapter 4). LSI is introduced as a bigger process than the large group conferences. LSI practice is synthesised at the level of principles and working elements shared in the family of all Large Group Methods. History, characteristics, methods and position in organisation theory are displayed. Finally, the practice of LSI is critically discussed. It appears that LSI originated between 1950 and 1990 from a web of thoroughly tested theories. In the following decades, the Large Group Methods crystallised from the foundational cloud of concepts. Consultants 'ran off' with them, modifying and mixing techniques, and sometimes mystifying the process for commercial reasons. The tone in most literature on LSI becomes mostly prescriptive, with focus on how to apply a specific Large Group Method, such as Future Search, Open Space Technology, World Café and Real Time Strategic Change. The prescriptions are often illustrated with examples of successful cases bringing about sustainable organisational change. Where mystifying LSI helped to sell the message and spread the methods, this research offers a more realistic view, demystifying the process again by critical reflection, and returning to evidence based practice through guidelines for the systematic evaluation of the effectiveness.

What is sustainable change?

At the second stop in the journey, a theoretical framework has been built to define different levels of the effectiveness of interventions, to distinguish short-term change from sustainable change (Chapter 5). This framework is based on the knowledge theory 'The Logic of Feeling' of Arnold Cornelis (1993) and the 'Complex Social Responsive Theory' of Ralph Stacey (2003). This has resulted in a model for development of collective learning in organisations, the 'Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication'. The first level of effectiveness is called 'first-order collective learning', or short-term change to get more and better work done. The second level is called 'second-order collective learning', or sustainable change through developing a lasting collective capacity for change.

Gathering success factors and observable effects, building an evaluation instrument

Through immersion in LSI practice, success factors and effects were collected. These items were derived from an extensive field study. The field study included a literature study, text analyses of approximately fifty articles with reported LSIs, interviews and workshops with thirty-five stakeholders (facilitators and participants of LSI trajectories, researchers of interactive interventions) and prolonged engagement with practitioners through membership of world-wide networks. Combined with the audit methods used in accountancy and quality management, this stage has resulted in an evaluation instrument (Chapter 6). The evaluation instrument had to be tested and improved in practice. This was done in a comparative case study, by reconstructing three LSI trajectories two years after the fact (Chapter 7). Stakeholders and documents of the three cases provided rich stories about success factors and the effectiveness. Along with the evaluation instrument, all the results of the case study were put together in a practical guide. The format of the

guide has been borrowed from a practical guide for medical treatment, since medicine has a long tradition in evidence based information leaflets for clients and practical guides for professionals.

Validating and improving the practical guide through member check conferences

Input for the guide came from a lot of different sources and people, but the development of the guide was done by a single researcher, applying qualitative research methods. Up until then the researcher had been the only one to do the analysing and concluding. A member check was necessary to check the credibility of the research process and outcome as well as to enhance the applicability of the guide in practice. The next episode (Chapter 8) concerns two interactive research conferences, one live and one online, for validation of the guide. In qualitative research, a member check is mostly held by sending report drafts for correction to participants, or by organising a meeting with a small group of key players. For several reasons a regular member check seemed inappropriate for this research project. First of all, a large number of stakeholders, practitioners, clients as well as their target groups were involved. It seemed right to invite them to discuss and verify the success factors and effects mentioned in the guide. Are they complete, correct, relevant, and observable? Second, for future evaluation of the effectiveness of LSI it is important that the evaluation instrument is adequate and usable as a tool. So researchers had to be invited too. Finally, the phenomenon of an evidence based practical guide is rather new in consultancy. What is needed to make the guide work? What do potential users see as advantages or disadvantages? Involvement of a large group of clients, practitioners and researchers was necessary to discuss content as well as usability of the guide. The conferences reflected the value 'practise what you preach', by using design principles and techniques of Large Group Intervention Methods. Up to sixty researchers, consultants and clients of LSI participated in the international conferences. They provided valuable corrections and improvements for the practical guide.

Content of the Practical Guide

The guide on how to use LSI effectively is offered to the reader as a separate Part (Chapters 9-13), making it easy to use as a stand-alone reference guide. The guide presents the results of the research on the effectiveness of LSI. The research questions have been answered by providing evidence based guidelines with observable measures for when and how LSI can contribute to sustainable change. This Part opens (Chapter 9) with how to use the guide in three different phases: assessment of preconditions before the start, assessment of design and performance during the LSI, and evaluation of the effectiveness after the LSI. For each phase, the guide offers guidelines, procedures and tools. For each phase the guidelines have been clarified (Chapters 11, 12 and 13), with observable indicators and illuminated with text boxes containing anecdotes from the case study. Reflection boxes offer deeper elaboration. The Client Information Leaflet (see Section 9.4) contains the essential information in an abbreviated form for clients.

Insights from the research process

The journey ends with a palette of insights. Where the Practical Guide described *when and how* LSI works, Chapter 14 discusses *why* LSI works. The model of 'The Logic of Will, Discipline and Communication' (developed in Chapter 5) provides a holistic view on when and why LSI works. This holistic view acknowledges the multi-variable complexity of LSI, involving situational facts as well as skills and feelings. The model explains when conditions of task and context are appropriate for the use of LSI as a change approach, why LSI contributes to sustainable change (defined as increased collective capacity to change), and the specific role of the facilitator as midwife in a participative process. Perspectives from other relevant theories, such as the Sensemaking theory of Karl Weick and the concepts of Frans de Waal on evolution of social primate behaviour, explain why long enough face-to-face meetings in the LSI process are important for building trust and for finding common ground for further action in the change process.

The main explanations and interpretations on the effectiveness of LSI are summarised as:

1. Without doubt, LSI can work as advertised, but the more you neglect the principles, the less effective the LSI will be.

2. The system has to be ready for a participative approach such as LSI. Leaders have to be willing to share power and take the contributions of stakeholders seriously.

3. LSI has to be worth the effort. LSI is a complex intervention with possibly high results, however it also comes with high risks when not applied in the right way.

4. Facilitators have to 'cook with the principles', looking for 'good enough' solutions balancing resources and ambitions. A situational approach in change strategy is essential, making for a good match between situation, task and design.

5. The 'right people in the room' is one of the most important success factors. The choice of 'the system', and of which people are invited into it, is crucial.

6. Expectation management is essential to build and maintain trust. Meeting face-to-face long enough is important because we are bodily creatures.

7. Sustainable change has to be sustained. The strength of the LSI, the complex mix that creates the emergence of collective learning, is also its weakness: the conditions have to be continued for sustainable effects.

LSI has been characterised as placing the task front and centre. This turns out to be both a strength and a liability. The system, the participant stakeholders and what is excluded as 'environment' are defined by the task or issue. In practice, every participant is already involved in many tasks and is part of many 'systems'. Each participant has to divide his attention, time and energy. This stresses the main success factors for LSI: the task has to be worth the effort, and conditions for sustainable change have to be continuously maintained.

Recommendations for further research

Chapter 15 provides recommendations for further research into the effectiveness of participative interventions for organisational change, in particular for LSI. Broadening the view through the evaluation of more LSI, in other types of systems and other types of LSIs, is recommended. Evaluation is preferably done with an audit team. Additional testing and development of the practical guide for specific user groups is required for further embedding of the guide in LSI practice.

Pros and cons of evidence based consultancy

In Chapter 16, the embedding of the guide is discussed in relation to the pros and cons of evidence based consultancy. The evidence for the effectiveness of LSI is to be found in scientific understanding and practical experience. However, combining academic research and LSI practice turns out to be like mixing oil with water. The main points of discussion are “Can the effectiveness be measured?” and if so, “Should the effectiveness be measured?”. There is a risk of rigid use of the Guide when the guidelines are downgraded to a checklist predicting outcomes, causing the loss of the essence of the art of facilitating. It has been emphasised that the guidelines are meant to help stakeholders applying the working principles of LSI so as to enhance the effectiveness. The Guide offers a framework that has to be filled in for each specific situation. That is the art of facilitation.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Focus van het onderzoek: Het ontwikkelen van een evidence based praktijkgids voor verbetering van de LSI praktijk

Het werken met grote groeps methoden, de zogenaamde 'Large Group Interventions Methods' heeft zijn eigen plaats veroverd in de praktijk van organisatieverandering en -ontwikkeling. Kenmerkend voor deze methoden is dat het hele systeem van interne en externe belanghebbenden van het vraagstuk in het veranderproces worden betrokken via werkconferenties met grote groepen, de Large Group Intervention (LGI). Daar wordt gewerkt aan het maken van een gedeeld beeld van de situatie en gezocht naar gezamenlijk draagvlak voor verdere actie. Een werkconferentie met een grote groep kan zeker succesvol voor de korte termijn (de interventie draagt bij aan het realiseren van meer en beter werk), maar duurzame verandering (de interventie draagt bij aan het ontwikkelen van collectief verandervermogen) is waarschijnlijk niet te verwachten van een eenmalige en korte werkconferentie. Daarvoor moeten ze ingebed worden in een groter participatief veranderproces met voorbereidende en vervolg bijeenkomsten. Dit grotere proces noem ik de veranderbenadering Large Scale Intervention (LSI), ook wel bekend als Whole Systems Change, maar wordt verwarrend genoeg in de literatuur ook wel gelijkgeschakeld met Large Group Interventions. Maar wanneer en hoe draagt LSI nu bij aan duurzame verandering? Wat zijn succesfactoren en hoe kan je beoordelen of het betrekken van een grote groep belanghebbenden, de stakeholders, de moeite waard zal zijn of geweest is?

Dit boek beschrijft hoe een praktijkgids is ontwikkeld voor de LSI praktijk, gebaseerd op systematisch verkregen reeds beschikbaar bewijs uit theorie en praktijk. Deel 1 en 2 van het boek beschrijven hoe in een wetenschappelijk onderzoeksproces de praktijkgids is ontwikkeld. Dit proces behelst een zes jaar durende toegepaste sociologische studie waarin een synthese van de wereldwijde LSI praktijk is gemaakt. Deel 3 presenteert de onderzoeksresultaten in de vorm van de praktijkgids (Practical Guide). Deze gids geeft richtlijnen en instrumenten die gebruikt kunnen worden voor het toetsen en bespreken van de omstandigheden en verwachtingen *voor* de start van een LSI, voor het ontwerp en uitvoering *tijdens* de LSI, en bevat een evaluatie instrument met hulpmiddelen voor het evalueren van de effectiviteit enige tijd *na afloop*. Deel 4 gaat over de inzichten die het onderzoeksproces heeft opgeleverd, zoals verschillende nieuwe perspectieven op waarom LSI werkt, inzichten voor onderzoek naar participatieve interventies en de voor- en nadelen van het werken in de consultancy praktijk met richtlijnen voor interventies die gebaseerd zijn op wetenschappelijk verkregen bewijs, de zogenaamde Evidence Based Consultancy (EBC).

Dit boek bevat geen recepten voor het ontwerpen en uitvoeren van een Large Group Intervention. Het biedt een kader met richtlijnen en aandachtspunten om de LGIs succesvol in te bedden in het grotere veranderproces om de kans op duurzame verandering te vergroten. Dit kader moet voor iedere situatie specifiek worden ingevuld.

Synthese van de LSI praktijk is van belang

De snelle verandering van de omgeving van organisaties en de toegenomen complexiteit van vraagstukken hebben bijgedragen aan een wereldwijde toename van het gebruik van participatieve (ook wel interactief genoemde) benaderingen voor organisatieverandering. In een participatieve benadering worden belanghebbenden betrokken in elke fase van het veranderproces. Het is gebleken dat machts- of expertmatige veranderbenaderingen weliswaar goede plannen kunnen opleveren, maar dat de implementatie van de plannen vaak te wensen overlaat, omdat mensen in de organisatie zich er niet bij betrokken voelen of omdat de planvorming te lang duurt. Daarnaast blijken top-down benaderingen niet effectief voor het ontwikkelen van verandervermogen in de organisatie. LSI is een participatieve veranderbenadering waarin top-down en bottom-up processen worden gecombineerd. Kenmerkend voor een LSI is dat op één of meer momenten in het proces het hele systeem wordt uitgenodigd voor een werkconferentie om een gezamenlijk beeld te vormen van de stand van zaken en verdere actie te plannen.

Er zijn veel boeken en artikelen beschikbaar over specifieke Large Group Intervention methoden om stakeholders te betrekken in het veranderproces. Deze studie laat zien dat er veel aanwijzingen zijn uit praktijkverhalen en ook enig onderzoek dat LSI werkt op de korte termijn. Die informatie gaat echter vaak over specifieke methoden en is niet gebundeld en beschikbaar in bruikbare aanwijzingen op het niveau van het grotere veranderproces van de LSI. Bovendien is er nauwelijks onderzoek gedaan dat gericht is op de effectiviteit voor *duurzame, doorgaande verandering voor de langere termijn*, zoals wel geclaimd wordt in veel literatuur over Large Group Methods. Ondertussen neemt de kritiek in de dagelijkse praktijk toe, waarin de grote groepsbijeenkomsten voor 'praatfestijnen' of 'eendagsvliegen' worden uitgemaakt. Naar mijn mening wordt deze kritiek vooral veroorzaakt door een onjuist gebruik van LSI, zoals het toepassen in omstandigheden die er niet geschikt voor zijn, door een ontwerp dat niet past bij de situatie of het vraagstuk of bij de verwachtingen, of door een slechte uitvoering van het proces. Hieruit komen de twee hoofdvragen voort die met het onderzoek naar LSI in dit boek beantwoord worden: "Uitgaande van reeds beschikbaar bewijs uit praktijk en theorie, wanneer en hoe blijken Large Scale Interventions effectief voor duurzame organisatieverandering?" En "Hoe kan deze empirische en wetenschappelijke kennis worden vertaald naar een praktijkgids voor de voorbereiding, toepassing en evaluatie van Large Scale Interventions?". Het doel van dit onderzoek is om meer inzicht te krijgen in de effectiviteit van LSI voor duurzame verandering en hoe die geëvalueerd kan worden, om zo bij te dragen aan effectievere organisatieverandering, in het bijzonder daar waar de betrokkenheid van stakeholders, intern en extern, nodig is voor succes.

Ontwerp en methoden van het onderzoek: Naturalistic Inquiry

Het boek beschrijft het onderzoeksproces als een zoektocht, een ontdekkingsreis. Niet alleen ontwerp, proces, resultaten en conclusies van het onderzoek worden gerapporteerd, maar ook de moeilijke en plezierige kanten van deze vorm van onderzoek doen, met de ontdekkingen en verrassingen die dat oplevert voor de onderzoeker. In de introductie van het boek (Hoofdstuk 1) wordt de lezer uitgenodigd voor een wetenschappelijke ontdekkingsreis in een praktijk die Large

Scale Interventions heet. De tocht begint met een sneak preview van twee LSIs. De eerste was succesvol en de tweede veel minder succesvol. De organisaties waren vergelijkbaar, het waren dezelfde facilitators. Wat maakte nu het verschil? Hoe zou de effectiviteit in het tweede geval verbeterd hebben kunnen worden? Om deze vragen te beantwoorden is een wetenschappelijke zoektocht voorbereid (Hoofdstuk 2 en 3). Een model voor de effectiviteit van interventies wordt gebruikt om de succesfactoren en effecten in te delen in de categorieën Taak/Context, Client, Consultant, Interventie en Effectiviteit. De methoden en opzet van het onderzoek worden uitgebreid besproken in Hoofdstuk 3. Dat is nodig, want met het toepassen van wetenschappelijke kennis voor het expliciteren van evidentie voor consultancy wordt de onderzoeker van twee kanten sceptisch bekeken. Gebruikers van LSI kunnen pogingen om het veranderproces te vangen in criteria voor succes afwijzen, omdat ze vrezen dat de kunst en mystiek van het proces onrecht wordt gedaan. Wetenschappers kunnen van mening zijn dat alleen objectief verkregen bewijs in een lineair één-variabele onderzoek, zoals experimenten met een controlegroep, kan bijdragen aan nieuwe theorie. De gekozen aanpak voor het onderzoek kan worden bestempeld als een empirisch veldstudie waarbij gebruik gemaakt wordt van de methodologie van Naturalistic Inquiry, een vorm van toegepaste sociologische wetenschap waarbij meerdere methoden en bronnen gebruikt worden voor het verzamelen van gegevens en voor de analyse daarvan. Om de rijkdom en complexiteit van de interventie en de dagelijkse organisatiepraktijk recht te doen wordt vooral gezocht naar samenhangende patronen in plaats van lineaire relaties tussen enkele variabelen.

Wat is LSI? Verkenning van de huidige LSI praktijk

In het eerste deel van de onderzoekreis wordt stil gestaan bij de huidige LSI praktijk (Hoofdstuk 4). Wat is LSI precies? LSI wordt gedefinieerd als een veranderproces dat groter is dan de werkconferenties met grote groepen. LSI wordt beschouwd op het niveau van de principes en werkzame elementen die de familie van alle methoden voor de grote groepsbijeenkomsten gemeenschappelijk hebben. De geschiedenis, kenmerken, methoden en de verschillen en overeenkomsten met andere veranderbenaderingen worden gepresenteerd. Tenslotte wordt de LSI praktijk kritisch besproken. Het blijkt dat LSI is ontstaan tussen 1950 en 1990 uit een web van grondig geteste theorieën. In de decennia daarna kristalliseerde deze wolk van basisprincipes uit tot min of meer afgebakende grote groeps methoden, de Large Group Methods. Consultants gingen er vervolgens mee aan de haal door de methoden aan te passen en te mengen en om commerciële redenen werd het proces soms gemystificeerd. De LSI literatuur krijgt een in hoofdzaak voorschrijvend karakter, gericht op het toepassen van een specifieke grote groeps methode, zoals Future Search, Open Space Technology, World Café en Real Time Strategic Change. Succesvolle cases die duurzame verandering brengen dienen daarbij als voorbeeld. Waar het mystificeren van LSI wellicht heeft geholpen om de boodschap te brengen en de methoden te verspreiden, brengt dit onderzoek een meer kritische blik, door terug te keren naar het zoeken van aantoonbaar bewijs voor resultaten voor duurzame verandering door het ontwikkelen van richtlijnen om op systematische wijze de effectiviteit van een LSI te kunnen evalueren.

Wat is duurzame verandering?

In het tweede gedeelte van de reis is een theoretisch kader ontwikkeld met verschillende niveaus voor effectiviteit van interventies, om korte termijn verandering en duurzame verandering te definiëren. Dit kader is gebaseerd op de kennistheorie 'De Logica van het Gevoel' van Arnold Cornelis (1993) en de 'Complex Social Responsive Theory' van Ralph Stacey (2003) en resulteerde in een model voor de ontwikkeling van collectief leren in organisaties, de 'Logica van Lef, Discipline en Communicatie'. In dit model worden twee niveaus van effectiviteit onderscheiden. Collectief leren van de eerste orde gaat om korte termijn verandering om meer en beter werk tot stand te brengen. Collectief leren van de tweede orde gaat om duurzame verandering doordat collectief verandervermogen wordt ontwikkeld.

Verzamelen van succesfactoren en waarneembare effecten voor een evaluatie instrument

Met een uitgebreide veldstudie is een duik genomen in de LSI praktijk om aantoonbare succesfactoren en effecten te verzamelen. Deze veldstudie omvat een literatuurstudie, een tekst analyse van circa vijftig artikelen met gerapporteerde LSIs, interviews en workshops met vijfendertig stakeholders (facilitators en deelnemers van LSI trajecten en onderzoekers van interactieve interventies) en langdurige betrokkenheid met beoefenaars van LSI door lid te worden van diverse wereldwijde netwerken. Deze inventarisatie mondde uit in een lijst indicatoren voor succesfactoren en effecten. Door de lijst te combineren met audit methoden zoals die in de accountancy en kwaliteitsmanagement systemen gebruikt worden ontstond een evaluatie instrument (Hoofdstuk 6). Dit evaluatie instrument is vervolgens getest en verbeterd in een vergelijkende case studie, door het reconstrueren van drie LSI trajecten twee jaar na afloop (Hoofdstuk 7). Interviews met stakeholders, analyse van documenten, foto's en andere voetafdrukken van de drie cases leverde rijke verhalen over succes factoren en effectiviteit. Alle uitkomsten van de case studie zijn samen met het evaluatie instrument verwerkt in een praktijkgids. De vorm van de praktijkgids is ontleend aan een praktijkgids voor een medische behandeling, aangezien de geneeskunde al een lange traditie heeft in het werken met op wetenschappelijk onderzoek gebaseerde bijsluiters voor cliënten en praktijkgidsen voor professionals.

Validatie en verbetering van de praktijkgids in member check conferenties

De inbreng van de gids komt uit een groot aantal verschillende bronnen en van een diversiteit aan mensen, maar de ontwikkeling van de gids is alleen door de onderzoekster gedaan. Tot zover was die de enige die met behulp van kwalitatieve methoden de analyses heeft uitgevoerd en de conclusies heeft getrokken. Een member check is nodig om de geloofwaardigheid van onderzoekproces en –resultaten te controleren en om de bruikbaarheid van de gids te vergroten. De volgende episode (Hoofdstuk 8) beschrijft hoe in twee internationale onderzoeks conferenties, waarvan één live en één online, de gids is gevalideerd. In kwalitatief onderzoek wordt een member check meestal gehouden door het sturen van concept-rapportages naar deelnemers, of door het houden van een bijeenkomst met een kleine groep sleutelfiguren. Om diverse redenen leek een reguliere member check niet passend voor dit onderzoek. Ten eerste was een grote groep consultants en

opdrachtgevers met hun doelgroepen betrokken bij het onderzoek. Het leek juist om de succesfactoren en effecten uit de gids met hen te bespreken en te verifiëren of ze compleet, correct, relevant en waarneembaar zijn. Ten tweede is het voor toekomstige evaluaties van de effectiviteit van een LSI van belang dat het evaluatie instrument adequaat is en werkbaar. Daarom moeten ook onderzoekers uitgenodigd worden voor de member check. De laatste reden is dat het verschijnsel van een 'evidence based' praktijkgids relatief nieuw is in consultancy. Wat is er nodig om de gids te laten werken in de praktijk? Wat zien potentiële gebruikers als voor- en nadelen? Daarom is gekozen voor interactieve onderzoekconferenties met een grote groep stakeholders van LSI om zowel inhoud als bruikbaarheid van de gids te bespreken. De conferenties weerspiegelen het principe 'practise what you preach', door gebruik te maken van principes en technieken van Large Group Intervention Methods. Bijna zestig onderzoekers, consultants en opdrachtgevers van LSI hebben deelgenomen aan de internationale conferenties. Dit leverde waardevolle correcties en verbeteringen op voor de praktijkgids.

Inhoud van de praktijkgids

De praktijkgids (Practical Guide) voor het effectief gebruik van LSI voor duurzame verandering is in het boek opgenomen als een apart deel (Deel 3, met de hoofdstukken 9-13), om gebruik als zelfstandig naslagwerk te vereenvoudigen. De gids presenteert de resultaten van het onderzoek naar de effectiviteit van LSI. De onderzoeksvragen zijn beantwoord door richtlijnen te geven voor wanneer en hoe LSI bijdraagt aan duurzame verandering die op aantoonbaar bestaand bewijs vanuit theorie en praktijk zijn gebaseerd. Dit deel opent met hoe de gids gebruikt kan worden in drie verschillende fasen: voor toetsing van de pre-condities voor de start, voor toetsing van ontwerp en uitvoering tijdens de LSI en voor evaluatie van de effectiviteit na de LSI. Voor elke fase biedt de gids richtlijnen, procedures en hulpmiddelen en toegelicht met waarneembare indicatoren (Hoofdstuk 11, 12 en 13). De richtlijnen worden verhelderd door middel van tekstkaders met levendige anekdotes uit de case studie en met reflecties vanuit de theorie voor verdere verdieping. Sectie 9.4 bevat een bijsluiter voor cliënten (Client Information Leaflet) waarin alle informatie kort wordt samengevat.

Inzichten vanuit het onderzoekproces

De onderzoekreis eindigt met een palet van inzichten. Waar de praktijkgids beschrijft *wanneer en hoe* een LSI werkt, wordt in Hoofdstuk 14 besproken *waarom* een LSI werkt. Het model van de 'Logica van Lef, Discipline en Communicatie' (ontwikkeld in Hoofdstuk 5) biedt een holistisch perspectief op wanneer en waarom een LSI werkt. Dit perspectief doet recht aan de complexiteit van een LSI traject, aan de veelheid aan variabelen gelegen in zowel situationele feiten als in vakmanschap en emoties. Het model verklaart wanneer de omstandigheden en het vraagstuk geschikt zijn voor LSI als veranderbenadering, het verklaart waarom LSI bijdraagt aan duurzame verandering (gedefinieerd als de ontwikkeling van collectief verandervermogen), en het verklaart de specifieke rol van de facilitator als vroedvrouw in een participatief proces. Perspectieven vanuit andere relevante theorieën, zoals de Sensemaking theorie van Karl Weick en de concepten van Frans de Waal over de evolutie van sociaal gedrag van primaten, geven nieuwe verklaringen voor waarom per-

soonlijke ontmoetingen in een LSI traject van belang zijn en lang genoeg moeten duren om vertrouwen op te bouwen voor het vinden van een gezamenlijk draagvlak voor verdere acties in het veranderproces.

De belangrijkste conclusies en interpretaties over de effectiviteit van LSI zijn als volgt samengevat:

1. Zonder twijfel kan een LSI werken als alle principes worden toegepast; hoe meer je echter toegeeft op de principes, hoe minder effectief de LSI zal zijn.

2. Het systeem moet toe zijn aan een participatieve benadering zoals LSI. Leiders moeten bereid zijn om macht te delen en om de bijdragen van stakeholders serieus te nemen.

3. LSI moet de moeite waard zijn. Het is een complexe interventie waarmee hoge resultaten bereikt kunnen worden, maar waaraan ook grote risico's verbonden zijn bij onjuiste toepassing.

4. Facilitators moeten 'koken met de principes' om een oplossing te vinden die goed genoeg is gezien de mogelijkheden en ambities. Een situationele benadering, met een goede match tussen de situatie, de taak en het ontwerp van het proces, is essentieel.

5. 'De juiste mensen in de bijeenkomsten' is een van de meest belangrijke factoren voor succes. Het bepalen van wat het systeem is en wie als stakeholders uitgenodigd worden is cruciaal.

6. Verwachting management is essentieel om vertrouwen op te bouwen en te onderhouden. Daarvoor zijn voldoende lange persoonlijke ontmoetingen van belang omdat we lichamelijke wezens zijn.

7. Duurzame verandering moet onderhouden worden. De kracht van LSI, het complex van speciale condities dat zorgt voor het ontstaan van collectief leren, is tegelijkertijd een zwakte: deze condities moeten ook na de LSI continu onderhouden worden om duurzame effecten te onderhouden.

In een LSI staat de taak of kwestie centraal. Dit blijkt zowel een sterkte als een zwakte van de aanpak. Waar de grenzen worden getrokken van het systeem en wie de deelnemende stakeholders zijn wordt bepaald door de taak of kwestie. In de praktijk is elke deelnemer betrokken bij vele taken en maakt deel uit van veel 'systemen'. Elke deelnemer moet zijn aandacht, tijd en energie verdelen. Dit benadrukt de belangrijkste succes factoren voor LSI: de taak moet de moeite waard zijn en de condities voor duurzame verandering moeten onderhouden worden.

Aanbevelingen voor verder onderzoek

Hoofdstuk 15 geeft aanbevelingen voor verder onderzoek van de effectiviteit van participatieve interventies voor organisatieverandering, in het bijzonder voor LSI. Een verbreding van inzicht en verfijning van de gids wordt aanbevolen door het evalueren van meer LSIs, in andere typen systemen en ander typen LSIs dan die van de case studie. Aanbevolen wordt om de evaluaties bij

voorkeur met een audit team te doen, om eventuele persoonlijke vooroordelen te compenseren. Voor verdere inbedding van de richtlijnen in de LSI praktijk is het in open source verder testen en ontwikkelen van de gids voor en door specifieke gebruikersgroepen nodig.

Voor- en nadelen van Evidence Based Consultancy

In hoofdstuk 16 wordt de inbedding van de praktijkgids besproken in relatie tot de voor- en nadelen van Evidence Based Consultancy. Aantoonbaar bewijs voor de effectiviteit van LSI moet gevonden worden in zowel wetenschappelijke kennis als kennis uit praktijkervaringen. Het combineren van academisch onderzoek en LSI praktijk blijkt echter te vergelijken te zijn met het mengen van water en olie. De belangrijkste discussiepunten zijn “Kan de effectiviteit van LSI wel goed gemeten worden?” en zo ja, “Moeten we dat wel willen?“. Er is een risico van een te strikt gebruik van de praktijkgids. Wanneer de richtlijnen teruggebracht worden tot een checklist om resultaten te voorspellen kan de essentie van de kunst van het faciliteren verloren gaan. Met nadruk wordt erop gewezen dat de richtlijnen zijn bedoeld om stakeholders te helpen om de werkzame principes van LSI zo goed mogelijk toe te passen, om de kans op een effectief veranderproces te vergroten. De gids biedt een kader dat voor elke situatie specifiek ingevuld moet worden. Daarin ligt de kunst van het faciliteren.